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A Multipolar Approach to Early Christian Arabic

Vatican Arabic Ms 13 in the Linguistic Landscape of Early Islam

Phillip W. Stokes

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies

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Dedicated to the memory of my beloved mother,
Lynda Marie Danner

أحنّ إلى لمسة أمّي...

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While the argument of this book is that a full and proper linguistic understanding of early non-Classical Arabic texts requires a paradigm shift, which entails disagreeing with how scholars have heretofore approached the manuscripts and papyri,

it is nevertheless also deeply indebted to the many brilliant scholars on whose shoulders I stand, and whose linguistic insights and observations are fundamental to my work. In this context, I want to acknowledge the godfather of Middle Arabic studies, the incomparable Joshua Blau (ז"ל), whose grammar of Christian Arabic is cited and engaged throughout this book. I can only hope that my work remains relevant long enough for scholars six decades (and counting) later to engage. I am likewise deeply indebted to three other giants of the field, whose perspicacious work is, and will remain, a constant partner in dialogue: Jérôme Lentin, Johannes den Heijer, and Juan Pedro Monferrer-Sala. The book has also profited from dialogue, in person and in print, with Kristen Brustad, Geoffrey Khan, Luca D'Anna, Simone Bettega, Melanie Hanitsch, Fokelien Kootstra-Ford, Tom Leddy-Cecere, Mike Turner, Jason Schroepfer, and Magdalen Connolly. Finally, special thanks go to Ben Kantor, whose logistical advice, perceptive comments, and encouragement have enrichened the process of publishing this book.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACC	Accusative
ADJ	Adjective
BCE	Before Common Era
BPL	Broken Plural
CE	Common Era
COLL	Collective
d.	(year of) death
DEM	Demonstrative
DU	Dual
FDU	Feminine Dual
FPL	Feminine Plural
FSG	Feminine Singular
GEN	Genitive
H	High sociolinguistic register
L	Low sociolinguistic register
MDU	Masculine Dual
MPL	Masculine Plural
MS	Manuscript
MSG	Masculine Singular
MSS	Manuscripts
NOM	Nominative
OBL	Oblique
PL	Plural
PN	Pronoun
RELPN	Relative Pronoun
SG	Singular

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

It is well known that Christians were among the early adopters of Arabic as a literary and theological language in the wake of the spread of Islam (Griffith 1986; 1988; 1997). Indeed, manuscripts of Christian texts—translations of holy texts and original compositions intended to address theological issues resulting from Islamic theological challenges of various kinds—are among our earliest non-Quranic manuscripts in Arabic. As is to be expected, one of the earliest apparent goals of Christian written production in Arabic was to provide written versions of the Bible, and especially the Gospels, for monastic and lay usage. For that reason, translations of the Gospels appeared early and often, beginning already in the 8th century CE (Treiger 2018). Among these early translations, manuscripts of what Hikmat Kashouh (2012, 86–96, §4.3) has shown to belong to a single translation family (which he has dubbed 'Family A'), translated from Greek, are especially common in the manuscript record. The most well-known translation of the Gospels dating to this early period does not, however, belong to Kashouh's Family A; rather, it is an independent translation (which he dubs 'Family H'), attested in a single manuscript—Vatican Arabic MS 13[1] (henceforth Vat. Ar. 13)—which, in both style and translation philosophy, differs significantly from other translations from the period.

[1] The MS is digitally available and freely accessible here: https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.ar.13.

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The significance of the Vat. Ar. 13, as Monferrer-Sala (2013, 69) aptly puts it, "has always resided, primarily, in its early date." Guidi (1888, 8–9), followed by Graf (1944, I:10), believed the manuscript dated to the 8th century CE, predating the datable manuscripts of Kashouh's Family A, such as Sinai Arabic MS 72 (897 CE), by a century or more. However, Graf later changed his mind and placed its composition in the 9th century CE, which has been the majority position ever since (Griffith 2013, 51; Monferrer-Sala 2013; Schultess 2019, 184–86, §3.5; Qabalan 2022; Monferrer-Sala and Qabalan 2023, 32–40).[2] Thus, the MS is more-or-less contemporary with a number of other MSS; its continued importance is due not to its early date per se, but rather the belief that, despite the date of Vat. Ar. 13, the text itself "represents *the earliest text of the extant AGM* [= Arabic Gospel Manuscripts]" (2012, 142, §5.1.5, emphasis original), a theory that ultimately echoes F. C. Burkitt's claim that Vat. Ar. 13 represents "the oldest monument of Arabic Christianity" (1898, 136), a theory to which Sydney Griffith likewise assents (2013, 251).

While Guidi, Burkitt, and now Griffith consider it the earliest translation tradition, Kashouh goes one step further, arguing that the archetype for the translation was made already in the pre-Islamic period, specifically in the 6th century CE, either in al-

[2] Hjälm (2020, 74–76), however, disputes this dating on palaeographic grounds, preferring a date in the 10th CE, the latter end of what Hanna Qabalan (2022) proposes. Zaki (2022, 316–19, §3.1) agrees with Hjälm, likewise locating the MS based on its palaeography to the 10th century CE. On these issues, see further §1.0 below.

Ḥīrah or Naǧrān (2012, 156–63). In making his argument, Kashouh relies heavily on the language of the manuscript. First, he contrasts Vat. Ar. 13 with the other manuscripts produced in the monastic milieu of southern Palestine. He first claims.

> ...the linguistic characteristics of h^1 [= Family H, MS witness 1, which is Vat. Ar. 13] are crucial because they are unique and not shared with other manuscripts studied in this study…. [These characteristics] strongly suggest that the archetype of h^1 was produced before the seventh century [CE]. (Kashouh 2012, 153)

Elsewhere, Kashouh makes straightforward claims about the language of Vat. Ar. 13, including that "the linguistic features… are of classical Arabic [*sic*]," further that "the linguistic characteristics of South-Palestinian texts are almost absent from h^1," and still also that any "slight deviations from the Classical Arabic [*sic*]... are also reflected in other Islamic Papyri of the eighth century which do not belong to the South-Palestinian corpus" (2012, 148–49). Other scholars make similar kinds of claims regarding the language. For example, when Sidney Griffith argues against Kashouh's theory of a pre-Islamic date (and either al-Ḥīrah or Naǧrān as provenance), maintaining instead that Vat. Ar. 13 was likely produced in the 7th/8th centuries CE in the monasteries of Palestine, he states flatly that "the surviving, early Arabic translations of non-biblical ecclesiastical texts… *show the same archaic linguistic features that one finds in the Bible translation* (2013, 116–17, emphasis mine). Presumably the point of Griffith's remark in this context is to counter Kashouh's assumption that 'Classical Arabic' features are completely absent in the texts produced in the monasteries of southern Palestine.

In light of this it is ironic and surprising that Monferrer-Sala (2013, 71; also, Monferrer-Sala and Qabalan 2023, 24) emphasises the opposite aspects of the language of the MS, treating Vat. Ar. 13 an example of 'Middle Arabic'.

> [Vat. Ar. 13] contains a number of features characteristic of the medieval Christian Arabic manuscript tradition, in which authors and translators sought to attain a classical register, but often incorporated interferences from the vernacular, giving rise to a continual alternation of Neo-Arabic and classical elements. The linguistic phenomena prompting these interferences shape the register known as 'Middle Arabic', although the phonetic peculiarities found in the text derive not from this linguistic register but rather from Neo-Arabic, which was shared by Christians, Jews, and Muslims.

Similarly, Vevian Zaki (2022, 319–20, §3.2) begins her section on the language of the Pauline Epistles attested in Vat. Ar. 13 by asserting that "[t]he variety of Arabic used in… V13 [=Vat. Ar. 13] is rather different from Classical Arabic, and is generally referred to as Middle Arabic."

How did these scholars arrive at such contradictory, indeed mutually exclusive, analyses of the language of Vat. Ar. 13? Unfortunately, neither claim is fully grounded in a close study of the distribution of whatever 'Classical' or 'Middle' features they identify. Indeed, no such study of this MS has yet been undertaken. Blau (1966–1967, 33, §1.4.3.18) includes Vat. Ar. 13 in his work on Christian Arabic, but he did not have access to the actual MS; he relied on transcriptions from Guidi (Gospels) and Scholtz (Epistles). As Kashouh points out (2012, 147–48, §5.1.5.4), Blau rarely cites the MS (26 times, according to Kashouh 2012, 148),

and, where he does, it is typically as an example of what he calls "Classical Arabic influence" on Christian Arabic. Kashouh's own discussion of the language is relegated to a section titled "Some of the Linguistic Characteristics and Translation Techniques of H^1" (2021, 153–67, §5.1.5.6). However, under "linguistic characteristics," the author includes only the following aspects of the style and translation technique of the manuscript: (1) frequent use of chains of synonyms for a single word in the *Vorlage*; (2) addition of clarification expressions; (3) "sophisticated" terms which "reflect the linguistic ability of the scribe" (155); (4) transpositions of paired words that are not attributable to textual variants in the underlying *Vorlage*; (5) use of a "double translation" for a single phrase; (6) harmonisation of the text. None of these constitutes linguistic analysis. Any of the phenomena he observes could apply regardless of what register or variety we identify with the language of the text. Kashouh does express disagreement with Blau over the latter's inclusion of the MS in his treatment of the corpus of Ancient South Palestinian MSS treated in his three-volume grammar (1966–1967). Kashouh identifies a few features that Blau considered non-Classical—such as lack of obligatory singular verbal agreement when occurring before the subject—and suggests Blau's analysis is either problematic or, more frequently, that Blau's transcription (made without access to photos of the MS) was faulty (2012, 148–49, n. 57). However, as we will see throughout this book, many of Kashouh's own claims about the distribution of these features are inaccurate. For example, as we will see in Ch. 7, plural verbal agreement with a following subject is not at all uncommon in any of the portions of the MS,

regardless of the scribal hand. The more fundamental issue to my mind is the underlying assumption that Classical Arabic is a clearly defined, and relatively uniform, linguistic category. As we will see further below, this is also problematic, and leads to problematic analysis, here and in other works.

Monferrer-Sala's study of a short portion (Matt. 11.1–19, fols 15v–16v) of the manuscript concludes, *contra* Kashouh, that the text is characterised by "Middle Arabic" and "Neo-Arabic" features. However, no such feature is identified in the subsequent discussion; indeed, the two terms are used only in the overview to the MS, quoted above, never in the discussion of the text itself. The remainder of the article is concerned with determining the *Vorlage*—whether Greek or Syriac—and implications thereof. It is not clear, without arguments based on close readings of the text, how either author arrived at the classification of any feature as "Middle Arabic" or "Neo-Arabic"; these categories are assumed likewise to be linguistically defined and self-evident. Once again, as we will see, this belief is unwarranted and leads to problematic descriptors. Zaki's (2022) discussion includes a handful of examples of features that, relying on Blau (1966–1967) and Hopkins's (1984) study of the early papyri, she considers examples of Middle Arabic, such as the belief that the lack of the *hamzah* diacritic indicating a lack of the glottal stop, as well as the use of a broken plural noun *ʿabīd* 'servants' instead of the dual *ʿabday* 'two servants', which she states is "common in Middle Arabic," presumably on the belief that this is *not* characteristic of Classical Arabic (320). However, as we will see in the discussion featured in the

coming chapters, the assumptions underlying Monferrer-Sala's and Zaki's conclusions do not stand up to closer analysis.

To be fair to these authors, they are in each case relying on established trends in scholarship on the language and linguistic development of Arabic. Traditionally, scholars have assumed that Classical Arabic was more or less equivalent, at least structurally, to the language of Arabic speakers before the advent of Islam (Rabin 1955; Blau 1966–1967, 19–20, §§1.1–1.2; 1977; 1999, 1–18).[3] Certainly, scholars have long recognised the diversity of linguistic features attested in the corpora that constitute the sources of the grammarians, such as the pre-Islamic poetry, the Quran, and the Ḥadīṯ (e.g., Rabin 1955; Zwettler 1978). When reading Islamic-era texts, however, including the earliest papyri, as well as Christian (and Judaeo-)Arabic manuscripts, the actual basis for linguistic comparison is a register equivalent to what gets described in later grammars of Classical Arabic, such as those of

[3] For an overview of the traditional paradigm within the context of the evidence from the grammarians, see Versteegh (2014, §4). For his part, Verstseegh takes a middle position, acknowledging evidence for the loss of some features—such as nominal case—in some varieties of pre-Islamic Arabic, but still considering a distinction between Old = pre-Islamic Arabic and Neo = Islamic-era colloquials that are the ancestors of modern dialects, the origin of which he places in the period of the conquests (ibid., §4.3, especially 56–58, and §§8.1–3). It should be noted here that in the second edition (2014, §3.2; first edition published 1997), Versteegh deals briefly with the evidence of the pre-Islamic inscriptions in, e.g., the Safaitic and Hismaic corpora, but does not accept that they reflect Arabic, a position contrary to the one assumed here throughout. On their classification as Arabic, see Al-Jallad 2018a).

Wright (1896) and Fischer (2002), as if the grammar and writing tradition were already uniform. The reason seems to be that, while scholars acknowledge the diversity of features discussed by early grammarians, such as Sībawayh (d. 180 AH/798 CE) and Al-Farrāʾ (d. 209 AH/824 CE), they believe them to have selected and prescribed for productive use only a small subset of these features. For example, in his overview of Classical Arabic for *The Semitic Languages*, Daniel Birnstiel (2018) begins by noting that while "[t]he notion of Classical Arabic is fraught with problems," it can be thought of as referring to "the linguistic standard *established as a subset of the features described and deemed acceptable by the 8th/9th-century Arab grammarians*" (367, §1, emphasis mine). Similarly, Retsö (2011) details several aspects of the diversity attested in the corpora that have traditionally been considered Classical Arabic, but concludes that, for his purposes—the entry on Classical Arabic in *The Semitic Languages: An International Handbook*—it can be defined as "a variant within the Arabiyya, *a selection of features from it by the grammarian established as the norm,* a kind of linguistic *šarīʿa*" (783, §1, emphasis mine).

Despite the ubiquity of the belief that the early grammarians prescribed a narrow set of features and proscribed most others, however, it is largely ahistorical. In fact, while grammarians like Sībawayh (d. 180 AH/796 CE) and al-Farrāʾ (d. 209 AH/824 CE) do occasionally express aesthetic preferences, or stigmatise a particular form, in most instances they do not rule out the variants they mention, nor suggest they are non-normative. As Van Putten (2022, 15–39, §§2.1–2) demonstrates, in virtually every

feature they document the grammarians report variants that contravene the textbook Classical Arabic, but which were accepted by the grammarians as legitimate *ʿArabiyyah*, and permissible in the recitation of the Quran. This is not to say that eventual norms did not emerge; they did. However, it is not at all clear when, exactly, those norms emerged, especially outside of official scribal contexts, and that these norms applied in every genre or community. Van Putten also adduces some evidence that by the 10th century CE, many, though not all, of the salient features associated with Classical Arabic as described in textbooks seem to have crystallised (2022, 227–30, §8.4). However, it must be emphasised that this analysis is based on a small data set—a few MSS and comments by the grammarians—and there is good reason to suspect that these sources are in fact not representative of all communities and contexts. The important point here is that, certainly when it comes to the centuries in which Vat. Ar. 13, along with other early Christian MSS, were written, Classical Arabic was not a distinct, linguistically defined lect or variety; there existed lots of variation, most of which was still considered prestigious. Further, the grammarians' discussions, as diverse as they are, depend on aesthetic and grammatical sensibilities of a subset of informants, and the intellectual traditions to which they belonged. No doubt other, differing linguistic preferences would have been forthcoming, but these are unfortunately mostly lost to us.

Although the corpora and features gathered and discussed by the grammarians—which, following both Retsö (2011, 782–83) and Van Putten (2022, 15–19), I refer to as the *ʿArabiyyah*—

was diverse, recent scholarship has shown just how much more linguistically diverse Arabic of the pre- and early Islamic periods actually was. Epigraphic evidence has revealed varieties of Arabic with features in every linguistic domain that differ from anything the early grammarians and their corpora attest, including dialects with a reduced nominal case system (e.g., Safaitic) and in which the case system had apparently completely collapsed (Al-Jallad 2015; 2018a; 2020a). Hardly confined to the pre-Islamic period and non-literary compositions, close study of the Quranic consonantal text shows that it reflects a Ḥiǧāzī dialect that differed in various ways from the canonical reading traditions (Arabic *qirāʾāt*) that developed for its recitation, as well as textbook Classical Arabic (Van Putten and Stokes 2018; Van Putten 2018a; 2022). The Quran in fact reflects a set of linguistic developments that were already underway, and which formed the basis of what became the Arabic writing system (Van Putten 2023). The bundle of Ḥiǧāzī dialects, and the writing system applied to their writing, spread with the Islamic conquests. Both spoken varieties and writing tradition continued to evolve. The dialects of the Ḥiǧāz, and the writing tradition, formed what Al-Jallad (2020, 57–78, §4) calls "Old Ḥiǧāzī," which seems to have constituted an early prestige variety in the early Islamic-era Levant.

Over time, however, beginning in the late ʾUmayyad and early ʿAbbāsid periods, the *ʿArabiyyah* tradition, associated with elite poetic production and used to legitimise tribal alliances and socio-political leadership in the Muslim *ʾummah* (Webb 2016,

§§4–5; Miller 2024, §§8–9), became a supra-regional prestige variety. One of the most significant linguistic implications of this development was the association of the recitation of the Quran with the nominal case morpho-syntactic inflection (Al-Jallad 2020, 69–73). The Quranic reciters all attest some version of the archaic nominal case and verbal mood inflection that we can reconstruct to Proto-Arabic, with a few small modifications. That said, the recitation traditions are not monolithic, even in this regard,[4] and in virtually every other linguistic domain attest significant variation, often differing from later textbook Classical Arabic norms (Van Putten 2022, 47–98, §3).

Evidence for the linguistic diversity of recitation traditions is not relegated merely to the canonically transmitted *qirāʾāt*; a large number of vocalised Quranic MSS, many of which do not conform to any known *qirāʾah*, attest still more variants (Van Putten 2019; Van Putten and Sidky 2024). While it might at first

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[4] A particularly salient example of this is the phenomenon of *al-ʾidġām al-kabīr* 'major assimilation,' in which two consonants across word-boundaries assimilate when a short vowel intervenes: *šahru ramaḍāna* > *šahr-ramaḍāna* 'the month of Ramadan' (Q2.185). This was widespread among non-canonical readers, but among canonical readers is characteristic primarily of ʾAbū ʿAmr's reading tradition (Van Putten 2022, 201–3, §7.2.1), although Ḥamzah also attests a different but related phenomenon (ibid., 209, §7.2.6). The phenomenon of *al-ʾidġām al-kabīr* is multi-faceted, involving assimilation of identical consonants, referred to as *ʾidġām al-miṯlayna*, and when the consonants share some aspect of articulation but are not identical, referred to as *ʾidġām al-mutaqāribayn* (Van Putten 2026, §1.6.1).

glance seem like a stretch to contextualise Christian Arabic writings and MSS with non-canonical Quranic reading traditions, even given the nascent states of the study of both, parallels are in fact forthcoming. For example, in multiple vocalised Arabic Gospel MSS dating from the 13th to the 15th centuries CE, a peculiar pattern of pronominal suffix assimilation is attested where the 3MSG suffix assimilates to a preceding *i* only when suffixed to the preposition *bi-*; otherwise, no assimilation takes place: *bi-hī*, but *fī-hu* / *ʿalay-hu* / *ʾabnī-hu* 'I will build it', etc. (Stokes 2023a). The same pattern is attested in a large number of 9th/10th CE vocalised Quranic MSS, though the system is not characteristic of any *qirāʾah* tradition known from the literary tradition (Van Putten and Sidky 2024, esp. 43–45). These same Christian Arabic MSS differ in other aspects of grammar from the grammar attested in the vocalised Quranic ones with the same pronominal assimilation, which makes it clear that a particular feature could become prestigious independent of the others with which it co-occurred in a particular MS or corpus.

The foregoing overview has significant implications for our conceptualisation of Middle Arabic, especially as identified in texts from the early Islamic period. Traditionally, Middle Arabic was considered the equivalent of, e.g., Middle English or Middle German, that is, a historical phase of the language in which a purportedly synthetic Old Arabic, equivalent to the pre-Islamic Arabic dialects and Classical Arabic, transitioned toward an analytic version of the language characteristic of Neo-Arabic (Blau 1966–1967, 19–21, 36–58, §1; 1977; 2022, 16–18; Versteegh 2014, 55–56, §8). This chronological definition has by now been

virtually completely abandoned in favour of a typological, sociolinguistic one, in which the phenomenon is related to the diglossic nature of Arabic, with the term Middle Arabic used to refer to "written Arabic of a mixed variety, irrespective of time" (den Heijer 2012a, 8; Versteegh 2014, 253–57, §9.1).

The question we must ask in light of the foregoing discussion regarding the significant diversity of the attested pre- and early Islamic Arabic corpora is, what is mixed? The answer to this question is typically that Middle Arabic consists of a mix of Classical and vernacular Arabic. However, several assumptions transcend the many scholarly differences undergirding the regnant Middle Arabic paradigm. Since I believe these assumptions are problematic, especially for this early period, in what follows I will cite them explicitly and adduce examples of their ubiquity. It should be emphasised here that the field of Middle Arabic studies is rich, and the conceptualisation and framing of varieties and registers in each period is diverse, differing from scholar to scholar.[5] I focus here only on a few regnant principles that I believe unite virtually all scholarship, and which I will contest, at least in the context of early Islamic-era Arabic texts.

First, Arabic diglossia (on which, see Ferguson 1959), is assumed to have always existed on a bipolar cline of prestige, and,

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[5] For an excellent introduction to the state of the field, see den Heijer (2012a). A full representation of the various proposals to account for the diversity attested in Middle Arabic is beyond the scope of this book. The critique here is of a few principles that I believe undergird most scholarship, regardless of subsequent framing, and which I believe are anachronistic when studying the language of early Islamic-era texts.

at least since the advent of Islam, one in which the H[igh] variety was equivalent to Classical Arabic and the L[ow] variety the colloquial one: "All… now tend to agree that the phenomenon covered by [Middle Arabic] is a continuum, or a mix, *between the H variety (usually identified as Standard or Classical Arabic) and the L variety (colloquial Arabic, also dubbed Neo-Arabic*" (den Heijer 2012a, 6, emphasis mine)

> The term Middle Arabic is used to refer to forms of Arabic that are intermediate *between the standard of Classical Arabic and spoken vernacular Arabic*. *These constitute the two poles of a diglossia*. Such a diglossia has existed throughout the history of Arabic and examples of Middle Arabic can be found from the early Islamic period down to the present day (Khan 2011, 817–18, emphasis mine)

Importantly, while virtually all scholars recognise that Classical Arabic was historically pluriform in various aspects of style and grammar, operationally it is equated with the normative, textbook manifestation that is, ultimately, a product of the *nahḍah* movement in the 19th century CE. For example, in his important article interrogating the meaningfulness of dividing pre-modern Middle Arabic along confessional lines, Johannes den Heijer admits the following when establishing the point of departure for defining Middle Arabic elements in early Christian and Judaeo-Arabic texts.

> ...we need a relatively well-defined frame of reference to distinguish between H and L elements, and it must be admitted that *codified, normative CA [Classical Arabic] grammar, despite its grey zones and its internal diversity in grammarians' opinions, pretty much provides us just that*…. In the present context… we are compelled to stick to a 'crude'

> dichotomy and *accept the prescriptively intended criteria of the Arab grammarians*… to efficiently assess the dynamics of a given text fragment within the socio-linguistic continuum that is Middle Arabic (den Heijer 2012b, 56, emphasis mine)

Similarly, in a chapter comparing Christian and Judaeo-Arabic scribal conventions from the 18th and 19th centuries CE, Esther-Miriam Wagner comments on the linguistic implications by admitting the following.

> The *point of reference will be an artificial, presumed Standard Arabic* of the Ottoman period, which is close to Classical Arabic and Modern Standard Arabic. This approach is admittedly flawed and will inevitably draw criticism, as the time period of the materials precedes the *nahḍah*, during which ideas of normative grammar informed by Classical Arabic were again superimposed on Arabic. *Yet there is no real alternative, as for now Classical Arabic or Modern Standard Arabic are the only varieties with a prescriptive, fixed set of rules, described in grammar books, against which any other variety can be measured or compared.* (Wagner 2018, 381, emphasis mine)

Second, while there is tremendous diversity of perspective on the nature of linguistic mixing in Middle Arabic texts, the source of features in any Middle Arabic text is virtually everywhere assumed to reflect one of either of the poles on the bipolar H/L spectrum, or the interaction thereof. In other words, features are classified as either H/Classical ones, L/colloquial ones, or ones resulting from the mixing of the two (sometimes referred to as 'Middle' features). Middle features are almost universally con-

sidered either (originally and historically, at least) pseudo-corrections (on which, see Hary 2007) that became acceptable variants (Blau 2008, 73–74), or rather attempts at a hybrid compromise grammatical form, again between the native colloquial grammar of the author and the standard, classical form (e.g., Smith and Bellem 2012): "Middle Arabic is the language of medieval A[rabic] texts in which classical, post-classical, and often also NA [=Neo-Arabic] and pseudo-correct elements alternate quite freely" (Blau 2002, 14)

> Whatever the precise chronological delimitation, one can agree to mean by Middle Arabic the language of numerous Arabic texts, distinguished by its linguistically (and therefore stylistically) mixed nature, as *it combines standard and colloquial features with others of a third type, neither standard nor colloquial Arabic,* and as an intermediate, multiform variety, *product of the interference of the two polar varieties on the continuum they bound* (Lentin 2008, 216, emphasis mine)

Drawing these two points together, I suggest that it is not an oversimplification to say that the current Middle Arabic paradigm assumes that what eventually becomes textbook Classical Arabic has lain at the top of the sociolinguistic spectrum since the early Islamic period, and that any subsequent Middle Arabic (sub)varieties (on which, see further below) ultimately derive from mixing features from colloquial grammars and that H[igh] register.[6]

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[6] This is the case, again, even when positing a non-Classical feature that became enregistered and, thus, a legitimate literary feature in its own right for this or that community. When speculation about the origin of such features is offered, they are, to my knowledge, always explained

One of the implications of these two regnant beliefs is that Middle Arabic is linguistically a negatively defined category, as Jérôme Lentin rightly notes: "To be more precise, Middle Arabic encompasses all the attested written layers of the language which can be defined as entirely belonging *neither to Classical Arabic nor to colloquial Arabic*…" (Lentin 2008, 216, emphasis mine).

Lentin's definition is profound and important, but, I contend, not often appreciated. Given the generally accepted definition of Middle Arabic detailed above, labelling a text as 'Middle Arabic' tells us only that it is not fully Classical Arabic (however defined), *not* where the non-Classical features originated *nor* whether those features were less or more prestigious in the author's sociolinguistic milieu than features at home in the Classical Arabic tradition (though, of course, this is implied by labelling them 'Middle' features). Further, the appellation itself gives us no clarity on the distribution of any purported 'Middle' feature.

Finally, when the H register is equated with Classical Arabic, which is treated operationally, if not theoretically, as equivalent with a narrow set of prescribed norms, priority in treatments of Middle Arabic texts is inevitably given to those aspects of the grammar that differ from Classical Arabic, which has the unintended result of flattening the grammar. This is especially true when it comes to certain morpho-syntactic features, such as nominal case, verbal mood, and gender and number agreement, where, as we have already seen, the assumption of a strict binary

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either as pseudo-corrections or features that represent deliberate attempts at hybridisation between the colloquial grammar and Classical Arabic.

between pre-Islamic dialects/Classical Arabic, on the one hand, and modern dialects, on the other, is assumed. As we will see later (Chs 5–7), discussions of these features in many scholarly works amount to little more than a collection of non-standard examples, the point of which is apparently to prove the 'Middle' nature of the language.[7]

I refer to this dominant paradigm in this book as the 'bipolar paradigm for Middle Arabic studies' because in it there are two primary sources of linguistic input from which features emerge, Classical Arabic and colloquial Arabic, which exist as the two distinct poles on a sociolinguistic spectrum, where H = Classical Arabic and L = colloquial Arabic. However, despite the widespread assumption that the same sources and sociolinguistic registers existed since (before) the beginning of the Islamic period, it is now increasingly a problematic one, especially for the early Islamic centuries. First, while the linguistic diversity of the *ʿArabiyyah* tradition is itself more profound than heretofore recognised, it is also clear that, as Marijn van Putten (2022, 16) rightly notes, "the early grammarians only mark the start of this negotiation" of what becomes normative Arabic, a process that took centuries, and the contours and pacing of which are unclear. More importantly for our purposes, close study of the other early corpora—consisting of Old Ḥiǧāzī, the Quranic *qirāʾāt*, vocalised

[7] For this general trend, see the following list, which is far from exhaustive: Blau (1966–1967; 1999); Knutsson (1974); Hopkins (1984); Bengtsson (1995); Arbache (1994; 2008); Grand'Henry (2008). Examples from the discussion of specific features are found throughout the following chapters.

Quranic MSS, and, indeed, other early Christian Arabic compositions—has revealed many features that do not become part of normative Classical Arabic. The bipolar approach to the sources of linguistic features in early MSS is therefore inadequate. Non-normative *ʿArabiyyah* features, as well as features completely unknown in the *ʿArabiyyah*, are amply attested in the MSS of the 9th and 10th centuries CE (and, indeed, later). Second, the assumptions that features typical of what became normative Classical Arabic were by definition ubiquitously more prestigious than others, or indeed that the crystallisation of these features into a recognisable register that constituted the ubiquitous H lect, are mostly anachronistic for the period during which Vat. Ar. 13 and the other Christian MSS were written.

Thus, if we intend to continue applying the term Middle Arabic in reference to the language of a text in which features of greater and lesser sociolinguistic prestige mix, it is important to establish this 'Middle' nature by thorough study of the features involved and comparison with relevant contemporary corpora. I am of course not claiming that genuine examples of Middle Arabic texts—in which features characteristic of normative Classical Arabic and a contemporaneous colloquial dialect are mixed—do not exist; undoubtedly, they do, especially in later periods (such as the Mamluk and Ottoman periods). And I likewise do not claim that Middle features—historical hyper/hypo-corrections that have become enregistered—do not exist. Again, they undoubtedly do. The argument advanced in this book, however, is that, especially for the period during which Vat. Ar. 13 and the other early Christian MSS were produced, we must move from a bipolar

paradigm to a multipolar one, in terms of both the range of sources of linguistic features we allow to identify in a text, as well as how we evaluate the prestige of the features.

It is worth briefly contrasting the present proposal with Blau's notion of "Standard Middle Arabic" and "Substandard Middle Arabic," by which he intended various literary registers that intentionally incorporated Middle as well as Classical and colloquial features (2002, 14). For Blau, a "standard" Middle Arabic variety incorporated relatively few Neo-Arabic (= vernacular elements), whereas "substandard" Middle Arabic incorporated Neo-Arabic relatively frequently. More recently, Grand'Henry has applied this concept more concretely in studies of different MS witnesses to the same text from different locations, attempting to identify linguistic isoglosses that distinguish what he calls "Sub-standard Middle Arabic" varieties (2008; 2012, 85–97). Thus, for both Blau and Grand'Henry, these varieties were legitimate literary registers in their own right, though apparently less standardised than, e.g., their conceptualisation of Classical Arabic. Blau notes that, in addition to what he considered genuine pseudo-corrections (i.e., ones that result from "the writer's unsuccessful endeavour to imitate the classical language"), these varieties were characterised by pseudo-correct features that became enregistered as productive, as well as "linguistic forms… absent both from his dialect and classical Arabic" (2008, 73–74).

While some overlap exists between their approach and the one promoted in this book, the "(Sub)Standard Middle Arabic" paradigm is still characterised by the same assumptions, and,

therefore, drawbacks highlighted above. Two aspects of this approach that contrast with the present proposal deserve to be highlighted, namely the range of sources of linguistic input and the methodology by which vernacular elements are identified. For Blau and Grand'Henry, the potential origins and sources of features are still either Classical Arabic, Neo-Arabic, or the product of some interaction of the two. Further, vernacular elements are virtually always identified based on their corresponding presence in a modern vernacular. This is especially glaring when it comes to the analysis of nominal case and verbal mood, where the assumption of a total loss prior to the earliest Middle Arabic texts is ubiquitous.[8]

The multipolar approach here, on the other hand, operates based on the principle that both the *orthographic* and *linguistic* nature of these manuscripts can only be fully understood synchronically when contextualised within the broader landscape of

[8] This results in both the choice of features as well as their description based on a departure from Classical Arabic grammar. For example, in his 2012 study of recensions of the translation of Homily 41 of Gregoy the Nazienzen from Greek into Arabic, Grand'Henry offers some brief remarks on a handful of examples of non-Classical, Middle orthographic, phonetic, morphological, and syntactic features. However, in order to identify and understand any possible register or literary variety, it is critical to understand the distribution and frequency of both Middle *and* Classical features. Here again, recognising and taking seriously the linguistic variation characteristic of Classical Arabic (and the *ʿArabiyyah*), as well as other linguistic traditions (Quranic *qirāʾāt*, etc.), rather than operating with a binary Classical/Middle dichotomy, reveals a more nuanced linguistic and sociolinguistic profile.

pre- and early Islamic-era Arabic—written, spoken, and performed—and diachronically when features are situated in relationship to a reconstructed Proto-Arabic. The goal of the book, therefore, is to demonstrate the promise of this alternative approach to the study of Middle Arabic texts by illuminating significant synchronic and diachronic insights into the development of Arabic varieties and registers, insights which are not forthcoming when approached with the regnant assumptions, discussed above.

In the approach outlined here, and by situating the features attested in the MS in the context of the pre- and early Islamic linguistic milieu, numerous features previously considered either colloquial intrusions or pseudo-corrections can be more profitably reinterpreted. In some cases, features treated as Middle Arabic in fact reflect ones at home in the *ʿArabiyyah* tradition, ones associated with Quranic recitation, etc. For example, there are places where **min ʾağl* 'for the sake of' is spelled منجل, which Blau (1966–1967, 101–2) and others have interpreted as reflecting the loss of the glottal stop typical of the dialects, and thus sub-standard. However, as we will see in Ch. 3, this realisation is typical of numerous Quranic reading traditions (such as Warš ʿan Nāfiʿ's), and accepted by the grammarians as a legitimate variant in the *ʿArabiyyah* as well. Other features typically treated as sub-standard and, historically at least, the result of pseudo-correction, especially non-Classical realisations of nominal case and verbal mood can, I will argue, be more accurately interpreted as reflecting the intentional interaction of different manifestations of Proto-Arabic morpho-syntactic systems, each of which were

considered prestigious in different contexts and depending on the genre, as we will see in Chs 4 and 5.

In what follows, I argue that there were multiple registers (or perhaps simply overlapping clusters of features), prestigious to varying degrees depending on author and audience, that constituted linguistic input for early Christian authors. While some of these features are typical of what became normative Classical Arabic, others are not. Conversely, I will argue that many features typically considered characteristically Middle are, in fact, at home in the *ʿArabiyyah* tradition as described by the early grammarians, and/or in corpora typically considered classical by default, such as Quranic recitation traditions. I will also identify a number of vernacular elements that are historically Middle; that is, they reflect a stage in the evolution from Proto-Arabic and anticipate a later stage attested in a modern dialect. And finally, we will see that the four main scribes responsible for portions of the MS witnessing the Gospel translations as it exists now demonstrate different grammatical and aesthetic sensibilities. What one scribe found preferable, and thus presumably prestigious, was not the same as the others. I will argue that only by thoroughly studying all these features, Classical and non-Classical, and documenting the range of their variation and distribution, can we truly understand the linguistic behaviour of scribal authors. In so doing, I hope also to model a compelling alternative to reluctant reliance on textbook Classical Arabic as the point of departure and basis of comparison when studying medieval texts.

Before beginning the study, however, some words about the MS, and the methodology by which I approach its study, are

due. It turns out that, despite the relatively straightforward codicological evidence, it has occupied an outsized place in several debates among scholars of early Arab Christianity.

1.0. Vatican Arabic MS 13: A Controversial Composition

Vat. Ar. 13 consists of 179 folios of parchment, approximately 28 × 18 cm on average, though the dimensions vary across the MS. Each folio contains somewhere between 19 and 22 lines, depending on the scribal hand. According to the Greek epigram on the last folio of the MS, it originally consisted of the Psalms, all four canonical Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, and the Pauline and Catholic Epistles. Currently, however, the Psalms and Acts of the Apostles have been completely lost, as have portions of the Gospels. The Pauline corpus is intact. The following is a list of the contents: Matt. 1.1–28.11; Mark 5.19b–16.8; Luke 3.31–7.71 and the fourteen letters of Paul (which in this tradition include Hebrews) (Kashouh 2012, 145, §5.1.5.2).

The codex in its extant form is composed of sections copied by four different scribal hands, which Kashouh (2012, 145) identifies as Hand A, Hand B, Hand C, and Hand D. A fifth hand (Hand E) made a small number of emendations to the text of Hand A, but did not otherwise contribute to the production of the MS and is not included in the present study. It is clear that Hands A and B operated concurrently, since they alternate on the recto and verso of a single folio (64r/v) in the middle of a quire, and that they represent the earliest layers of the text; Hand C restored portions of the beginning of the Gospel of Matthew, with Hand D

restoring two different sections in the Gospels after that. The text and folios that each scribal hand is as follows:

Table 1: Text and folios produced by each scribal hand

Text	**Folios**	**Scribal Hand**
Matt. 1.1–6.18a	1–6v	C
Matt. 6.18b–10.27a; Matt. 26.17b–28.11	7–14; 47–54	D
Matt. 10.27b–26.17a; Mark 5.19b–7.12a; Luke 3.31–71	15–46; 55–64r; 75–86	A
Mark 7.12b–16.8; Letters of Paul	64v–74; 87–179	B

On all of this there is unanimous scholarly agreement (Kashouh 2012, 145–47, §§5.1.5.2–3; Schultess 2019, 176–96, §6.3; Zaki 2022, 314–25, §3; Monferrer-Sala and Qabalan 2023, 30).

There is considerable disagreement, however, over the dating of the scribal hands. Most of the detailed palaeographic discussion has centred on Hand A, which attests features that Kashouh (2012, 145–47, §5.1.5.3) identified as archaic, such as the writing of the *ʾalif*, which is formed with a right bent foot at the base, and the heart-shaped medial *ʿayn / ġayn*. However, since Hands A and B operated concurrently, and the latter does not attest the same archaic letter shapes, Kashouh dates this coordinated activity to around 800 CE. In her detailed study of early Christian palaeography, however, Hjälm argues that even the weightiest of palaeographic archaisms, the right-leaning *ʾalif*, occurs primarily at the beginning of a line, a practice that is attested much later than the 8th/9th centuries CE, and combined with the features of Hand B, concludes it was produced in the "early tenth

century" (2022, 75). Zaki (2022, 316–19, §3.1), examining features from Hand B, the scribal hand responsible for the Pauline corpus, agrees based on a comparison with 9th-century CE MS London, BL, Or. 8612. More recently, Hanna Qabalan (2022) undertook a comparison of the orthography of Hand A in Vat. Ar. 13 with other MSS produced in the monasteries of Syria and Palestine in the 9th century CE and argues for a date at the very end of the 9th or the early 10th century CE. Regarding Hands C and D, little beyond Kashouh's speculation of a 10th-century CE date for Hand C and 12th-century CE for Hand D, has been done (Kashouh 2021, 93).[9] For the purposes of this study, I will remain neutral on whether Hands A and B date to the 9th or 10th centuries CE, and will speculatively adopt a 10th-century CE dating for Hand C and a 12th-century dating for Hand D. None of the linguistic analysis to follow, however, relies on these dates.

More speculatively, there has been significant debate over the relative date of the translation itself. Kashouh argues for a date in the late pre-Islamic period, either in al-Ḥīrah or Naǧrān, and relies on aspects of the language of the text to support this contention. Kashouh's arguments rely on two main contentions (for the following, see Kashouh 2012, 168–71, §5.1.5.8). First, he notes that, in a number of places, the scribes of Vat. Ar. 13 appear to have mis-parsed a presumably dot-less form in an exemplar, suggesting that they were unfamiliar with the vocabulary. Since he places the composition of Vat. Ar. 13 around 800 CE, this

[9] In fact, in Monferrer-Sala's and Qabalan's (2023) critical edition, the portions of the Gospels produced by Hand D are omitted; only Hands A, B, and C are included (the focus being on the 'archaic' sections).

would push the archetype of the translation still farther back into the past. He likewise assumes that the vocabulary would not be unfamiliar, even if the exemplar were obscured by lack of dots, if the origin of the translation were the same monastic milieu as the other Arabic Gospel MSS. Second, and more immediately relevant for the present linguistic study, Kashouh compares a few phrases from Vat. Ar. 13 with the purported lintel inscription on a monastery from 6th-century CE al-Ḥīrah. The source of the inscription, however, is Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī (d. 1229), a 12th/13th-century CE geographer and historian, which makes the text extremely dubious. There is no reason to believe this is an accurate representation of the purported inscription, if indeed it existed. Further, the parallels he draws are vague and do not amount to a strong case for connecting the MS with al-Ḥīrah.[10] Kashouh emphasises the perceived linguistic differences between Vat. Ar. 13 and the other Arabic Gospel MSS, asserting that "the language… is dissimilar to the south Palestinian language and does not contain the linguistic characteristics of any AGM [= Arabic Gospel Manuscript] of this province" (Kashouh 2012, 168). Since the present monograph constitutes the first and only treatment of the

[10] For example, Kashouh highlights the use of the collocation of بنى بيعة 'build a monastery/church' in both, as well as the collocation of غفر خطيئة 'forgive sin', and the proliferation of the verbs رحم *raḥima* 'he was merciful', قبل *qabila* 'he accepted', and اقام *ʾaqāma* 'he raised'. Needless to say, these few lexical similarities are not compelling in the absence of further evidence.

language of the MS, however, it is unclear how such a determination could have been made. In any event, as we will see, this claim is false, regardless of which scribal hand one examines.

Most scholars have rejected Kashouh's proposal on historical grounds. Griffith (2013, 51) rightly points out that "this conclusion… is based on a series of ever more tenuous extrapolations, which have as their anchor in real time an extant text, probably copied in Palestine around the year 800 CE." Kashouh's theory becomes even more problematic if the subsequent palaeographic studies noted above are taken into account, which put the composition of the text closer to 900 CE (or perhaps later). It is further clear that the leaps backward in time, even from 800 CE into the 6th or 7th century CE, based purely on mis-parsing an original dot-less consonantal text are problematic, since these occur even in texts that had been well-known and studied, including the Quran.[11] However, here again one gets the sense that

[11] One of the most famous examples of this is at Q6.57, where the ʿUṯmānic Text is ambiguous, and can be read either as يَقْضِ الحَقَّ *yaqḍi l-ḥaqqa* 'fulfils/determines/executes the truth', or يَقُصُّ الحَقَّ *yaquṣṣu l-ḥaqqa* 'he narrates/tells the truth'. The *yaqḍi* reading was common in Iraq, despite the problematic short spelling typically associated with the jussive, which is ungrammatical here; the *yaquṣṣu* reading was popular among Ḥiǧāzī readers (Sadeghi 2013, 24, §2.1). Ibn Masʿūd reportedly read *yaqḍī bi-l-ḥaqqi* 'judges according to the truth', reflecting يقضى بالحق, which differs from the ʿUṯmānic recension. More similar to the examples Kashouh identifies in Vat. Ar. 13 are, e.g., most readers reading consonantal المنشيت as *munšaʾāt* 'lofty (PL)' at Q55.24 (though note that Ḥamzah and ʾAbū Bakr read it with *kasrah*, e.g., *munšiʾāt* 'elevated (FPL)', or most readers reading consonantal خطيكم as *ḫaṭiʾāt / ḫaṭiyāt* 'your sins' at two places, Q7.161 and Q71.23. ʾAbū ʿAmr, however,

scholarly ascription of the language of Vat. Ar. 13 to the category of 'Middle Arabic' is due, at least in part, to a desire to buttress the contention that the MS is at home in the Palestinian monastic milieu. While we can be confident that the location of the production of Vat. Ar. 13 was indeed a monastery in the Levant, the claim—often asserted as fact—that it was produced at Mar Saba outside Jerusalem is not certain. Indeed, Schultess (2019, 177–79) and Zaki (2022, 58–60, and also 314) both support a Syrian provenance, which is not incompatible with the palaeographic evidence (Hjälm 2022, 176). And while it is true that Kashouh's blanket claim that the MS lacks any features characteristic of MSS definitely produced in the monasteries of Palestine is inaccurate, it is also incorrect to assume that the language is identical across scribal hands; indeed, as we will see, the language of Hand C is significantly closer to that of the other Gospel MSS than to the language of Hands A, B, and D.

It is thus clear that, while we scholars can deduce a great deal about the production of the manuscript itself, the lack of a proper linguistic study of Vat. Ar. 13 precludes a more accurate and nuanced understanding, not just of the provenance—geographic and chronological—of the MS, but also the scribal culture in which it was produced. This book attempts to fill that lacuna.

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reads both of these as *ḫaṭāyā* 'sins', as all readers do in all other places where the consonantal form occurs. Note also that the pointings that Kashouh identifies as errant might also reflect then-current words/forms that simply did not continue in use and, thus, appear to us to be mis-parsings.

We will see throughout that a number of orthographic and grammatical differences characterise the different scribal hands, differences that bear directly on the question of provenance and complicate the binary picture presented in most discussions of the MS. Before commencing our study, however, I will outline the approach and methodology of the book, as well as its structure.

2.0. Methodology and Structure

In the following chapters, I undertake a thorough documentation of the language of the Gospel portions of Vat. Ar. 13, comprising the first 86 folios. For features that exhibit variation, I have collected every instance and tagged it for all relevant information in order to offer a quantitative analysis of the language, reducing the number of impressionistic claims as much as possible. I compare attested features in the MS with what is attested in other relevant corpora, including especially other early Christian Arabic MSS, the early Islamic papyri and inscriptional evidence, Quranic MSS, the Quranic *qirāʾāt* traditions, and the *ʿArabiyyah* as recorded and described especially in the works of the grammarians Sībawayh and Al-Farrāʾ. I do not privilege later normative Classical Arabic; instead, I consider the distribution of each feature within the attested linguistic diversity of the early Islamic period. Further, in many cases we will encounter the same kind of inter-MS linguistic variation attested in Vat. Ar. 13—characteristic of much of the early Christian Arabic corpus and which has traditionally been explained by appealing to pseudo-correc-

tion or colloquial influence—in the context of other corpora accepted in the broader canon of *ʿArabiyyah*/Classical Arabic. This is especially true in the case of the Quranic *qirāʾāt*, which exhibit tremendous variation, to the degree that a later literature—called *ḥuǧaǧ* 'explanations'[12]—developed to explain how the mutually exclusive feature profiles are at home in the *ʿArabiyyah*. While many of the arguments adduced in the *ḥuǧaǧ* literature are at odds with modern linguistic principles, and the goals are ideologically motivated, I argue that the genre offers a methodological corrective relevant for the analysis of early Islamic-era Arabic. Specifically, the *ḥuǧaǧ* authors maximally attempt to identify reasons for a given feature, assuming intentionality, agency, and competency, rather than presupposing a homogeneous norm and that any deviation must have been unintentional. Throughout this work, I attempt to make sense of variation, relying on sound linguistic principles in a way that assumes competency, appealing to pseudo-correction only when no other possibility is forthcoming.

In addition to synchronic analysis, I study the language variation attested in Vat. Ar. 13 diachronically, situating it in the scholarly conversation about the linguistic history of Arabic. To that end, and where relevant, I reference features attested in the pre-Islamic epigraphic record, medieval texts from later periods, and indeed the modern Arabic dialects. Further, diachronic discussion engages with comparative Arabic and Semitic data to plot linguistic forms relative to Proto-Arabic, not Classical Arabic. In

[12] Also occasionally called *tawǧīh* literature.

some cases, the normative Classical Arabic form, or one attested in the *ʿArabiyyah*, is archaic and more or less reconstructible to Proto-Arabic. Elsewhere, though, the *ʿArabiyyah* (or later normative Classical) feature is innovative. Additionally, when a feature is clearly related to one that is attested in modern dialects, I attempt to connect them diachronically. This is not necessarily because I believe the Arabic spoken by Christians in the 9th/10th CE Levant is directly ancestral to any particular modern dialect; rather, it is an example of how the ancestors of the modern dialects, however conceptualised, might have evolved.

Finally, it is worth making explicit here that the goal of this book is to provide a description of the language of the MS and to contextualise it within the early Islamic period. This includes studying the variation across scribal hands, which, as we will see throughout the following chapters, is significant and relevant. One implication of this is that this book is only secondarily a description of the grammar of the original translation, the contours of which are adduced mainly when the same features or patterns are consistent across hands. The focus here, however, is on understanding the language variation attested in the MS that we have, which, as we have seen, is indisputably a product of the ʿAbbāsid Levant, whether Syria or Palestine, and likely dates to the late 9th/early 10th century CE.

The structure of the book is as follows. In Ch. 2, I address the topic of the orthography attested across the MS, identifying commonalities, but especially differences, between the scribal hands. In Ch. 3, I attempt to derive some information about the phonetics and phonology of the variety/varieties or register(s)

reflected in the MS. Since these are of course related, there is a certain amount of overlap between the discussions. In the end, I decided to separate the topics, for two reasons. First, in Ch. 2, I focus on methodology and argue that the assumptions that underlie the practice of interpreting early MSS are wrong and should be abandoned. So, I opted to separate that discussion (Ch. 2) as much as possible from my interpretation of the data from Vat. Ar. 13 (Ch. 3). Second, and more practically, had I combined the two, the resultant chapter would have been so long as to be unwieldy.

In Ch. 4, I document the morphological forms for which any amount of variation exists in the MS. Note that, as with syntax (Ch. 8), I omitted certain categories in order to make the length manageable. The criterion on the basis of which I decided which forms were included or not was, again, variation: any forms that are both well-known from across the early corpora and which exhibited no variation were omitted. In Chs 5–7, which are the longest of the book, I tackle aspects of the morpho-syntax of the MS. Ch. 5 examines the distribution of nominal case marking, Ch. 6 studies verbal mood distribution, and Ch. 7 engages in a thorough analysis of gender and number agreement patterns in the MS. In each, every relevant form from the MS was included. The chapters are, therefore, both longer and more data-heavy than the others. While this makes them dense, I believe that this approach is necessary to avoid the impressionistic claims of previous works, and results in a more nuanced and accurate picture of the language, and, as I will show, de-exoticises them. Ch. 8

studies various aspects of the syntax of the MS, and Ch. 9 concludes the discussion, highlighting significant findings, implications thereof, and proposing several new directions for the future of the field.

We turn now to the study of the language of Vat. Ar. 13, beginning with the study of its orthography.

CHAPTER 2. ORTHOGRAPHY

As we have already noted, much of the work on the scribal execution of Vat. Ar. 13 has focused on palaeography; very little has been detailed about the scribal orthographic practices therein. The following discussion is not comprehensive, but rather focuses on aspects that attest inter- and intra-scribal hand variation, and/or otherwise recur across early Islamic-era manuscripts, especially Christian ones, many of which have often been anachronistically compared with Classical Arabic spelling practices that developed centuries later. Indeed, as we will see, differences between these early orthographic variants have often played a significant role in exoticising early Christian Arabic texts, giving the impression of much greater distance between Christian MSS and others that are considered Classical by most, if not all, scholars. Though I have left much of the discussion of phonetics and phonology to Ch. 3, in some places the discussion below involves phonetics and phonology of necessity. Chs 2 and 3 are therefore best read together as advancing a single analysis, with the present chapter focusing on the orthographic basis for judgments about phonetics and phonology, and Ch. 3 reviewing and consolidating the evidence. Note that throughout the book I reproduce the Arabic from MSS exactly as it occurs, so long as this is possible given the nature of the available fonts. I offer my interpretation of the text in a transcription provided below each example.

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1.0. Consonantal Dotting

Previous scholars who have studied portions of the Gospels of Vat. Ar. 13 have noted the lack of consistent dotting, among other aspects of the orthography of the MS (e.g., Monferrer-Sala 2013, 72; Qabalan 2022; Monferrer-Sala and Qabalan 2023, 29). As far as I can tell, however, none has ventured beyond the basic observation that the dots are inconsistently applied. Such inconsistency, and apparent randomness, was characteristic of Arabic MSS, Quranic and non-Quranic, as well as papyri and inscriptions, from the beginning of the Islamic period (Dutton 1999; Déroche 2009, 117). Bursi (2018) demonstrates, however, that a certain idiosyncratic preference for dotting certain letters, and perhaps certain words, more frequently than others existed already in the earliest Islamic-era writing. A study of all the dotted versus undotted forms from a single folio—15 recto and verso—produced by Hand A shows that some letters are more frequently marked than others.

Generally, we may observe that dots above the letter are more frequently written relative to those under the letter. Further, letters that are distinguished by a single dot are often less likely to be dotted relative to those letters with the same skeletal shape but that are distinguished by two or more dots. Special mention should be made of the *ḏāl*, which is less likely to be dotted when it occurs in the relative pronoun series than when it occurs in a noun or verb. The same appears to be true of the *yāʾ*. This brief exercise is not meant to be exhaustive, since a full study of the four main scribal hands and their dotting proclivities is beyond the scope of the present study. Suffice it to say that close

orthographic studies of this and other early Christian MSS remain *desiderata*.

Table 2: Dotting frequency by letter on fol. 15r–v (Hand A)

Grapheme	Number (%) with dot	Number (%) without dot
f[1]	27 (77%)	8 (23%)
q[2]	36 (88%)	5 (12%)
y	72 (68%)	34 (32%)
ḏ	5 (63%)	3 (27%)
n	61 (78%)	17 (22%)
t	21 (91%)	2 (7%)
š	6 (75%)	2 (25%)
b	42 (71%)	17 (29%)
ṯ	7 (88%)	1 (12%)
ǧ	9 (53%)	8 (47%)
ḫ	4 (80%)	1 (20%)
ẓ	2 (100%)	0
ḍ	6 (86%)	1 (14%)
ẓ̣	0	1 (100%)
ġ	4 (100%)	0

The presence or absence of dots on certain letters in early Christian Arabic MSS (along with other corpora, such as the early papyri) has traditionally constituted a source of purported examples of non-Classical realisations of various sounds. For example, the absence of dotting on the *ḏāl* has been taken as evidence for the merger of the voiced interdental with the voiced stop, i.e., **ḏ* > *d* (Blau 1966–1967, 108, §15.2; Knutsson 1974, 88; Grand'Henry 1988, 234–91; Wagner 2018, 383, §2.6). Conversely, the presence of dots on the *kursī yāʾ* was taken to imply

[1] The *fāʾ* in Vat. Ar. MS 13 is marked with a single dot above the letter.

[2] The *qāf* in Vat. Ar. MS 13 is marked by two horizontal dots above the letter.

the absence of the *hamzah*, e.g., دمايكم 'your blood' is assumed to necessarily reflect /dimāyi-kum/ (Blau 1966–1967, 83–105, §11; 2002, 33–34, §17; Knutsson 1974, 69–76; Bengtsson 1995, 111–14, §3.2.5.2; Grand'Henry 2006, 384; Monferrer-Sala 2015, 347, §1.4; Wagner 2018, 383, §2.5).

Obviously, in a scribal culture where there is a clear standard, adherence to that standard tells us little more than that the scribe was able to achieve his goals, whereas we might infer a good deal about the lack of adherence to said standards. Thus, if consistent and ubiquitous dotting in cases of, e.g., the *ḏāl*, or the lack thereof (+/– the *hamzah* diacritic) in the case of the *kursī yāʾ*, were the norm, then the frequent or total divergence from this practice might indeed constitute evidence for such changes. In order to conclude that we have evidence for underlying phonetic differences based on purportedly deviant orthographic practices, whether due to influence from the vernacular in a particular manuscript or imperfect knowledge of the standard, however, it is essential that we know *exactly* what scribal standards actually existed at the time. That is, we should be able to say confidently that they *are* in fact deviant. In the absence of some kind of manual or textbook from (roughly) the time and location of the production of the MSS, the best way to determine the kinds of standards is to examine other contemporary MSS, papyri, and inscriptions. The importance of establishing this is unfortunately often not acknowledged or properly appreciated. Instead, norms that are actually typical only of very recent Classical Arabic are retrojected onto earlier texts, rather than examining practices contemporaneous with the MS or corpus under discussion.

When we look at contemporaneous material, we find that each of the kinds of spelling practices attested here are also common in MSS, including of texts that are taken as indisputably Classical Arabic, regardless of period. While Blau et al. assume that the lack of dotting on the *ḏāl* in Christian MSS is solid evidence for the merger of interdental consonants with plain stops (Blau 1966–1967, 108, §15.2), dot-less spellings are also encountered in Classical MSS as well, e.g., Classical *kaḏālika* spelled كدلك in Or. 298 (fol. 4r), and Classical *kaḏā* spelled كدى in Ar 3315 (fol. 17v). This should not be surprising; after all, the development of the *ʾihmāl* pointings was presumably due to the need to indicate when dot-less consonants were intentionally dot-less versus when the lack of dotting was merely stylistic (on the development of which, see Witkam 2015). The phenomenon of spelling *ḏāl* without dots—indeed, spelling consonants with or without their dots—is not in itself evidence for the intended phonetic realisation one way or the other. More compelling are instances in which a MS attests spellings of **ḏ* by د along with consistent spelling of **ṯ* with ت. Such cases are attested in later MSS (Grand'Henry 1988, 234–91, MSS D and H, *apud* Grand'Henry 2006, 384, §1.2), though the numerically most common pattern is the combination of د and ذ for **ḏ*, along with each of ت and ث, and even dot-less forms, for **ṯ* (Knutsson 1974, 78–94, §5; Bengtsson 1995, 114–20, §3.2.6). In Vat. Ar. 13, however, **ṯ* is spelled either with ث or without dots completely; no clear examples of ت spellings are attested.[3] Thus, *pace* Monferrer-Sala

[3] Indeed, Blau (1966–1967, 106, §12.4) reports no certain instances of **ṯ* > *t* in the corpus of MSS to which he had access at the time. That

(2015, 348), the dot-less spellings of *ḏ are not clear evidence of this phenomenon in Vat. Ar. 13.[4]

More common, and more fundamentally problematic, are the assumptions that underlie discussions of the glottal stop in early Christian Arabic—and Middle Arabic, more broadly—MSS. The most problematic of these assumptions from the perspective of orthography is of the existence of a uniform 'Classical Arabic orthography' already in the late ʾUmayyad and ʿAbbāsid periods.[5] For example, in the introduction to his section on orthography, Blau (1966–1967, 61, §§2.1–2) begins with the declaration that "[i]n no domain is the influence of CA [=Classical Arabic] so decisive as in the realm of orthography…. Accordingly, the linguist has to depend upon occasional deviations *from the Classical orthography* for discerning phonetic features" (emphasis mine). Often, scholars simply assume a uniform and stable 'Classical' or-

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still does not prevent him from concluding that "it seems quite probable that, as in sedentary dialects, *th* [= *ṯ] has developed into *t*" (ibid). To illustrate the problematic nature of the assumptions on which such analyses are built, it is sufficient to note here that, at the conclusion of the passage just quoted, Blau refers the reader to §15.2, which is the section in which he treats dot-less spellings of *ḏ*.

[4] Monferrer-Sala (2015) treats not the Gospel portions but the Pauline Epistles, which were likely produced by Hand B of the Gospel portions. Nevertheless, the same principle and outcome are true in that portion of the MS as in the sections with the Gospels.

[5] Assumptions about the realisation of the *hamzah* in a purportedly unified *ʿArabiyyah* and Classical Arabic impact the analysis of the phonetics and phonologies of early MSS as well. These will be discussed in Ch. 3.

thography, which forms the point of departure when treating specific phenomena. When discussing the realisation of the glottal stop in the language of Christian Arabic copies of the book of Judges, Knutsson claims that:

> The fact that all the MSS—except for one or two special words in some of them—regularly employ the two dots of *yāʾ* even when this serves as *kursī* of *hamza* (thus, in cases where the two dots of *yāʾ according to strict Classical Arabic spelling should be omitted*) is also most probably to be interpreted as an indication of the disappearance of the glottal stop (1974, 60, emphasis mine).

In other words, scholars have assumed that the standard already in the 8th/9th centuries CE was the ubiquitous inclusion of the *hamzah* grapheme, as well as the consistent distinction between *yāʾ* as a consonant, which included dots, and *kursī yāʾ*, which would lack them. When they subsequently find MSS that either lack the *hamzah* grapheme, use it irregularly or only occasionally, or find *kursī yāʾ* with dots, they conclude that this is due to the lack of glottal stop in the vernacular of the scribe, as well as (perhaps consequent) lack of command of the unified standard (Blau 1966–1967, 83–92; Knutsson 1974, 65–77; Bengtsson 1995, 111–14, §3.2.5.2; Monferrer-Sala 1995, 347–48; Grand'Henry 2006, 384).

This approach, however, is untenable, as even a cursory examination of contemporaneous Classical MSS shows the same variation was in fact the norm. Comparable Classical manuscripts contemporaneous with the Christian Arabic MSS that are not Quranic are very few in number. Nevertheless, those that exist are fully compatible with the evidence from the Christian Arabic

MSS, including Vat. Ar. 13. First, it must be clearly stated that we do not know exactly *when* the *hamzah* sign was invented, let alone when it became viewed as an indispensable part of the orthography. To my knowledge, the earliest evidence of the *hamzah* sign in a dated Classical Arabic literary text is Or. 298, which is a copy of ʾAbū ʿUbayd al-Qāsim b. Sallām's *Ġarīb al-Ḥadīṯ*, dated to 252 AH/866 CE.[6] In the MS, the *hamzah* sign is used, but only occasionally. For example, on the same folio—15r—the word *šayʾan* 'something (ACC)' is written without the *hamzah*, spelled شيًا, but the word *taktaʾib* 'she is downcast', is written with the *hamzah* atop the *kursī yāʾ*, which is written with dots. In another place on the preceding folio (14v), the word *ġāʾilatun* 'malice', is written with dots on the *yāʾ*, but without the *hamzah* sign, i.e., as غايلةٌ 'calamity, disaster'.

Even Classical MSS that post-date Hands A, B, and C of Vat. Ar. 13, and which are contemporaneous with Hand D, attest the same uneven application of the *hamzah*, as well as the regular dotting of *kursī yāʾ*. A good example of this is MS Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, Ar. 3315 (henceforth Ar. 3315), a likely-11th ceuntry CE copy of Ibn al-Nadīm's (d. 385 AH/995 CE) *Kitāb al-Fihrist*.[7] On the same folio (2r), the form *šuʿarāʾi* 'the poets (GEN)' is written with both final *hamzah* and the *maddah*, i.e., written شعرآءِ, but the word *ibtidāʾi* is written without either, i.e., written ابتدا. On the following folio, the word *ʾasmāʾi-him* is written with the

[6] The MS is digitised and accessed here: http://hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:2000455.

[7] On the MS, see Arberry (1956, 31). The MS is digitised and accessed here: https://cbl01.intranda.com/viewer/image/Ar_3315/13/.

maddah, no *hamzah*, and dots on the *kursī yāʾ*, i.e., as اسمآيهم. The presence of the *maddah* implies the presence of the glottal stop, despite the absence of the *hamzah* grapheme (Van Putten 2021, 205, in reference to this same form and word). A likely 10th-century CE MS, Garret 598H, a copy of Ibn Šāḏān al-Rāzī's *Suwar al-Qurʾān wa-ʾĀyāti-hī wa-Ḥurūfu-hū wa-Nuzūlu-hū*, is another roughly contemporaneous example of a Classical MS that attests the *hamzah*, but only irregularly makes use of it. It also spells *kursī yāʾ* with dots and lacks the *hamzah* regularly on such nouns, e.g., اسرايل (fol. 22v) spelling of Israel,[8] and the frequent spelling of **miʾah* as either مايه or مانه, but not مائه.

If we interpreted these spellings and this alternation as the Christian Arabic MSS have heretofore been read, it would require that we conclude that the glottal stop had been lost in the vernacular of the scribes that produced these MSS, and that they constitute Middle Arabisms in these otherwise Classical MSS. However, a more likely and parsimonious interpretation is simply that both the writing of the *hamzah* as well as dotting of the *kursī yāʾ* were acceptable orthographic practices, constituting allography, and do not indicate an absence of the glottal stop in the register(s) in which the scribe was composing the text. In this vein we may recall that early Quranic MSS were only sparsely dotted, and this was the case for early papyri and inscriptions as

[8] Note that this form occurs in a citation of the Quran. Thus, even when citing the Quran, spelling with *hamzah* is not required. It is possible that something like ʾAbū Ǧaʿfar's *hamzah bayna bayn*—where a hiatus, but not a full glottal stop, occurs between two vowels—is intended here. On the *hamzah bayna bayn*, see Van Putten (2026, §1.5.4.3).

well (see again the discussion in Bursi 2018 for details). No study of which I am aware charts the development of orthographic practices specifically related to *hamzah* marking, dotting of *kursī yāʾ*, etc., but there is no evidence that those norms existed at the time of the writing of Vat. Ar. 13, or indeed many of the Christian Arabic MSS written in the subsequent centuries.[9]

Another related phenomenon that is often misinterpreted is the dotting of final *yāʾ* in contexts where in normative Classical Arabic the word ends in *ā*, i.e., the so-called *ʾalif maqṣūrah*. The primary concern of Blau's discussion of the *ʾalif maqṣūrah bi-ṣūrat al-yāʾ* is documenting the alternation between spellings with final ى and the relatively frequent variant with final ا (Blau 1966–1967, 81–83, §10; so also Hopkins 1984, 22–25, §21; Knutsson 1974, 58–59, §3; Bengtsson 1995, 104, §3.2.3; Grand'Henry 1996, 5, n. 9); he does not mention or discuss the alternation of dotted versus undotted forms. Dotting the *ʾalif maqṣūrah bi-ṣūrat al-yāʾ* occurs regularly already from the earliest MSS, as they regularly occur in, e.g., Sinai Arabic MS 74 (9th CE), which attests الي and متي on fol. 3r and علي on fol. 4r. In a paper on the portion of Vat. Ar. 13 that contains the Pauline Epistles, Monferrer-Sala (2015, 346) suggests that dotted spellings of the *ʾalif maqṣūrah bi-ṣūrat al-yāʾ* indicate *ʾimālah* of *ā* > *ē*. However, this is very problematic. *Yāʾ* is a letter than can take dots, regardless of

[9] See Stokes (2022) for examples of Christian Arabic MSS from the 13th–15th centuries CE that attest the same practice, including Sinai Arabic MSS 76 (13th century CE), 82 (13th century CE), 89 (13th century CE), 90 (13th century CE), 91 (13thcentury CE), and 80 (15th century CE).

whether it is being used to write /ā/, /ē/, /ī/, /y/, or indeed /ʾ/. It is clear that whether or not to dot the *yāʾ*, including but not limited to instances of *ʾalif maqṣūrah bi-ṣūrat al-yāʾ*, was mostly a matter of scribal preference. For example, unlike the scribe that wrote Sinai Arabic MS 74, Stephen of Ramla, the monk and scribe who wrote Sinai Arabic MS 72 (897 CE), typically did not dot *yāʾ*, regardless of underlying realisation. Thus, we find الى and حتى on fol. 4r, and he often left final *yāʾ* undotted, even when representing underlying *ī*, e.g., fol. 4r شعبى /šaʿbī/ 'my people'. The same variation is attested in the Classical MSS from the same period. Or. 298 regularly leaves final *yāʾ* undotted, regardless of the underlying phonetic realisation, attesting each of هى /hiya/ 'she/it', سُمِّىَ /summiya/ 'it was called', and على /ʿalā/ 'upon' on the same folio (4r). Ar 3315 attests both dotted and undotted forms, such that on the same folio (1v) we find both على and علي. At the same time, final *ī* is often written with a *yāʾ* lacking dots, such that a quick perusal of the first five folios attests no examples of *fī* 'in' spelled في, but rather only فى. The presence or absence of dotting does not appear to be significant for distinguishing between *ī* / *ay*, and *ā* or ʾ, until the modern period, and even then, not ubiquitously, as a perusal of Egyptian newspapers will demonstrate.

I have argued that the above orthographic variation does not in and of itself tell us about the underlying phonetic reality. This is not, however, because orthography cannot possibly inform us about such matters. In addition to the point that we must be sure about what was and was not standard in order to know which deviations are true deviations and which are not, we can

add that there is an important difference between random variation in spellings, on the one hand, and orthographic variants that are in complementary distribution, on the other. If *ʿalā* is spelled variously على and علي with no discernible difference based on, e.g., phonetic context, then we cannot conclude anything about the realisation of the final vowel one way or the other. However, when words which in normative Classical Arabic ended in *ā* from III-Y roots are spelled with *ʾalif maqṣūrah bi-sūrat al-yāʾ*, but words ending in *ā* from III-W roots are spelled with *ʾalif*, this is not random, but complementary, distribution and, in the case of the Quran where this difference is attested, indeed indicated a difference in realisation of these sequences in the language behind the writing tradition (Van Putten 2022, 133–35, §5.8). Etymological **ayv* sequences mostly shifted to *ē* (< **ay* < **ayv*) in the dialects of the pre-Islamic Levant and Ḥiǧāz, whereas word-final **awv* shifted to *ā* as one can clearly discern from Quranic rhyme (Van Putten 2017; Al-Jallad 2017; 2018). The important point is that orthographic features *can* inform us about aspects of the phonetic and phonological reality behind the text, but only when we can be confident that (1) we know what orthographic standards existed at the time, and (2) the variation is not randomly distributed, but complementary.

Other than the variation between dotted and undotted letters, there are instances in which a word can be clearly identified based on context and yet is pointed otherwise. Clear instances of this are infrequent; examples include the following.

- pointing *ʾatā* 'he came' with a *nūn*, as if انا *ʾana* 'I' on fol. 3v

- pointing *sirr* ‘secret’ with three dots on top of the letter, as if شر *šarr* ‘evil’, on fol. 5v
- pointing *ḥāǧah* ‘need, lack’ with a dot as if the first letter were *ǧīm*, جاجه on fol. 6v

Note that many of the clearest instances of this mis-parsing occur in portions produced by Hand C. Kashouh (2012, 151–52; 2021, 180–82, §4.12) has identified a handful of additional examples, though some are debatable.

2.0. *Plene* versus Defective Spellings of *ā*

Spellings of word-internal *ā* in Vat. Ar. 13 are mostly *plene*, spelled as expected with ا. In a few places, however, an archaic defective spelling is attested. Specifically, the number *ṯalāṯ(ah/īna)* is spelled defectively across scribal hands.

(1) وانطلق فردّ تلك الثلثين درهمًا (51v)
w-ʾntlq f-rdd tlk ʾl-ṯlṯyn drhman
‘And he went and returned those thirty coins’

(2) وكان قد مضا من النهار حين صلبوه ثلث ساعات (74r)
w-kʾn qd mḍʾ mn ʾl-nhʾr ḥyn ṣlbw-h ṯlṯ sʾʿʿt
‘And three hours had passed from the day when they crucified him’

(3) لانهم قد اقاموا عندى مند ثلثه ايام (25r)
l-ʾn-hm qd ʾqʾmwʾ ʿnd-y mnd ṯlṯh ʾyʾm
‘Because they have stayed here with me for three days’

This spelling is common with this word specifically in other Christian Arabic MSS (Blau 1966–1967, 77–79, §9); examples of *ṯalāṯ(ah/īn)* spelled defective in early Christian MSS include.

(4) منذ ثمان وثلثين سنه (Sinai Arabic MS 154, 120r)
mnḏ ṯmʾn w-ṯlṯyn snh
‘Thirty-eight years ago’

(5) لان لهم ثلثه ايام مقيمين عندي (Sinai Arabic MS 74, 35r)
l-ʾn l-hm ṯlṯh ʾyʾm mqymyn ʿnd-y
‘They have stayed here with me for three days’

(6) فاعطا ثمارا منه مايه ومنه ستين ومنه ثلثين (Sinai Arabic MS 70, 16r)
f-ʾʿṭ ṯmʾrʾ mn-h mʾyh w-mn-h styn w-mn-h ṯlṯyn
‘And it produced fruit, some one hundred-fold, some sixty-fold, and some thirty-fold’

Defective spelling was still common well into the early Islamic period (Diem 1979, 255–56; Hopkins 1984, 11–14, §10), though it became increasingly relegated to high-frequency words (Van Putten 2023b, 114–15, §3.3). The defective spelling of *ṯalāṯah* seems to have remained widespread, though, for centuries, since it is found still in, e.g., in MS Garrett 598H (Ibn Šāḏān al-Rāzī’s *Suwar al-Qurʾān wa-ʾāyāti-hī wa-Ḥurūfu-hū wa-Nuzūlu-hū*), ثلثه الاف *ṯalāṯat ʾālāf* ‘three thousand’ on fol. 4v. This practice continues to be the norm in subsequent Classical orthographic practice (Ibn Al-Sarrāǧ, *Kitāb al-Ḫaṭṭ*, 186).

Defective spellings are attested in proper names that have *plene* versus defective variants in Vat. Ar. 13. This is the case with, e.g., *sulaymān* ‘Solomon’, spelled سليمن (instead of سليمان) on fol. 1r and fol. 19r, and *ʾibrāhīm* ‘Abraham’ spelled ابرهيم (instead of ابراهيم) on fol. 1r and fol. 2v. The defective spellings should be considered the default for Classical orthography (see already Ibn Al-Sarrāǧ, *Kitāb al-Ḫaṭṭ*, 166–67). Early Christian MSS, including Arabic Gospel MSS, largely spell these names defectively, but some early MSS spell them *plene* (e.g., ابراهيم, in the

9th-century CE Vatican Borg. Arabic MS 95, fol. 3r), and this pattern becomes very common in subsequent centuries (see, e.g., Sinai Arabic MSS 82, 90, 80, 112).

Other examples of defective spellings of long *ā* occur in isolated cases, such as *ṣalāḥ* 'righteousness' and *ṣāliḥ* 'righteous', both on fol. 64r:

(7) يايها المودب الصلح ما الصلح الذى اعمل به كما ارث الحياه الخالده
yʾyhʾ ʾl-mwdb ʾl-ṣlḥ mʾ ʾl-ṣlḥ ʾlḏy ʿʿml b-h kmʾ ʾrṯ ʾl-ḥyʾh ʾl-ḫʾldh
'Oh, righteous teacher, what righteousness must I do to inherit eternal life?'

Interestingly, Ibn al-Sarrāǧ (*Kitāb al-Ḫaṭṭ*, 167) mentions the elision of the *ʾalif* in spellings of *ṣāliḥ* when used as a proper name. Examples of demonstrative pronouns and adverbs of manner in which the deictic prefix *hā* is spelled *plene* versus defective will be discussed below in Ch. 4, §§4.2 and 4.5.

3.0. Quranic versus Classical Spellings

As we have already seen, the early Islamic period was a time of continued evolution in the orthographic practices associated with writing in the Arabic script. Many of the innovations that became characteristic of normative writing in Arabic are clearly Ḥiǧāzī and spread due to the influence of the Quran (Van Putten 2023b). Some spelling practices common in the Quranic consonantal text, however, gradually fell out of practice, largely due to differences between the ways in which words were spelled versus their pronunciation in the *ʿArabiyyah* and, eventually, normative Classical

Arabic. In other words, the spelling of these words was classicised. Two groups of words are relevant for our study of Vat. Ar. 13, namely (1) forms in which a post-consonantal glottal stop is not written with *ʾalif*, and (2) a group of words—some nativised loanwords, others native Arabic words—that are spelled with word-final -وه, despite its pronunciation in Classical Arabic with word-final *ā*. Quranic and non-Quranic spellings alternate for both categories in Vat. Ar. 13.

In the Quranic consonantal text, and in early orthography,[10] including Classical orthography, an etymological post-consonantal glottal stop is not represented by *ʾalif*. Thus, one finds **yasʾalu* 'he asks' spelled in the Quranic consonantal text يسل instead of يسال / يسأل, and **ʾafʾidah* 'hearts' spelled افده instead of افده / أفئدة (Diem 1976, 257, 259). It has long been recognised that the orthographic patterns attested in the Quranic consonantal text reflect ones suited to write a variety that had lost *ʾ (e.g., Rabin 1951, 130; Diem 1976 257), and recent studies of the Quran-internal evidence, including evidence from rhyme, confirms that the language of the Quran likely lacked the glottal stop in most contexts (Van Putten 2018b; 2022, 120–22, §5.2). In Vat. Ar. 13, most instances of etymological glottal stop in post-consonantal position are spelled in accord with the eventual standard, with *ʾalif*, e.g., طمانينه Classical *ṭamʾanīnah* 'peacefulness' (fol. 17r), مراه Classical *marʾah* 'woman' (fol. 57v), and, albeit rarely,

[10] Hopkins (1984, 29–30, §26) reports the same commonality in the early Islamic-era papyri, and *ʾalif* in such positions is regularly omitted in other Christian Arabic MSS as well (Blau 1966–1967, 99–100, §11.5.1).

يسال ‘he asks’ (fol. 69r).[11] The Quranic spellings are, however, the default ways to write imperfects, imperatives, and nouns of the root **SʾL*.

(8) جعل يسل تلاميذه (26v)
ǧʿl ysl tlʾmyḏ-h
‘He began asking his disciples’

(9) جعلت تسله (33r)
ǧʿlt tsl-h
‘She began asking him’

(10) فقال لهم اسلكم انا مسله (35r)
f-qʾl l-hm ʾsl-km ʾnʾ mslh
‘Then he said to them, “I will ask you about a matter”’

(11) سلينى (83v)
sly-ny
‘Ask (FSG) me!’

The default spelling of 3MPL *yasʾalūn* ‘they ask’, conversely, is with the *ʾalif*:

(12) حعلوا يحصون الجماعه بحرص ويحثونهم ان يسالو فيلاطس (73v)
ǧʿlwʾ yḥswn ʾl-ǧmʾʿh b-ḥrṣ w-yḥṯwn-hm ʾn ysʾlw fylʾṭṣ
‘They started inciting the crowd and goading them to ask Pilate’

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[11] I have not noted certain examples of **CʾI* and *CʾU* in the Gospel portions of Vat. Ar. 13. Possible examples are the spellings بدي and بدوا / بدو ‘beginning’, which could reflect underlying **badʾi* and *badʾu*, but could also reflect metathesised forms *badiʾ* and *baduʾ*. See the discussion in Chapter 3.1 below.

(13) فبكم ابوكم الذي في السموات احري يوتي الخيرات الذي يسالوُنه (8v)
f-bkm ʾbw-km ʾlḏy fy ʾl-smwʾt ʾḥry ywty ʾl-ḫyrʾt ʾlḏy ysʾlūn-h
'So how much more is your father in heaven able and willing to give good things to those who ask him'

(14) فجعلوا يسالونه ويقولون هل يحل الابرا يوم السبت (17v)
f-ǧʿwlwʾ ysʾlwn-h w-yqwlwn hl yḥl ʾl-ʾbrʾ ywm ʾl-sbt
'They began asking him and saying, "Is it allowed to heal on the sabbath?"'

Thus, there is a singular versus plural distinction in the spelling attested in Vat. Ar. 13, where singular forms are overwhelmingly spelled as in the Quran, but the plural forms are virtually all spelled with *ʾalif*. This is actually reminiscent of the early (7th-century CE) Quranic MS Ṣanʿāʾ DAM 01–29.1, where ا is used to write the glottal stop even in places where, in Classical orthography, we would expect to find a glide / *kursī*, e.g., Q14.37 افاده *ʾafʾidah* 'hearts' (Puin 2011, 170, 173; Van Putten 2018b, 111–14, §9). This MS also attests يسالون at, e.g., Q21.23 and Q43.19, but يسل in Q21.23.

The other group of nouns that exhibit non-Classical but Quranic spellings in Vat. Ar. 13 are the **faʿawah*-stem nouns that include the following: *ṣalāh* 'prayer', *ḥayāh* 'life', and *zakāh* 'alms'. While these nouns eventually came to be written -اه, reflecting their pronunciation in Classical Arabic, in the Quranic consonantal text they are spelled -وه when not suffixed with a pronoun. When a pronominal suffix is attached, however, they are spelled with the *ʾalif*, as in Classical Arabic. Thus, their Quranic distribution is صلوه 'prayer' but صلاتكم 'your prayers'. While this was traditionally seen as a purely orthographic practice (Jeffery

1938), it seems likelier that both spellings reflect underlying pronunciations, e.g., unsuffixed /ṣalōh/ but suffixed /ṣalātu-kum/ (Al-Jallad 2017; Van Putten 2017, 64–67, §10; 2022, 123, §5.3). Quranic spellings of *ṣalāh* and *ḥayāh* are attested. The latter occurs once with Quranic spelling, e.g., حيوه on fol. 15v, but is more frequently spelled classically, e.g., حياه as on fol. 64r, among others. The noun *ṣalāh*, however, is frequently spelled as in the Quran, with the same peculiar distribution +/– pronominal suffixes.

(15) اليس هو مكتوب ان بيتي يدعا بيت الصلوه (66v)
ʾ-lys hw mktwb ʾn byt-y ydʿ byt ʾl-ṣlwh
'Is it not written that my house will be called a house of prayer?'

(16) وهدا الجنس من الشياطس لا يخرج الا بالصوم والصلوه (28v)
w-hḏ ʾl-ǧns mn ʾl-šyʾṭyn lʾ yḫrǧ ʾlʾ b-ʾl-ṣwm w-ʾl-ṣlwh
'This kind of demon does not leave except by prayer and fasting'

(17) ولذلك اقول لكم ان كل ما سالتمو{ه} في صلاتكم... (67r)
w-lḏlk ʾqwl l-km ʾn kl mʾ sʾltmw{-h} fy ṣlʾt-km...
'For that reason, I say to you that everything you ask for in prayer...'

(18) تطويلهم صلاتهم (69r)
tṭwyl-hm ṣlʾt-hm
'Their making their prayers long'

It appears that of all the nouns characterised by this spelling in the Quran, it was retained longest with *ṣalāh*, perhaps marginally with *ḥayāh*, but the spellings of the other nouns were apparently classicised earlier on. For example, the noun *zakāh* occurs in Vat.

Ar. 13, but only with the classical spelling الزكاه (fol. 69r), never as زكوه in the Gospels of Vat. Ar. 13.[12]

4.0. Final *ʾalif* versus *yāʾ* in III-*Y*/*W* Roots

The Ḥiǧāzī spelling conventions attested in the Quran distinguish between sounds that in Classical Arabic were all realised as *ā*. There are three sources of what in normative Classical Arabic is realised as *ā*: (1) **ā* (as in, e.g., the demonstrative element *ḏā*), (2) **awV* (III-*W* roots, like *daʿā* < **daʿawa* 'he invoked, called', and *ʿaṣā* 'stick, rod' < **ʿaṣawV*), and (3) **ayV* (III-*Y* roots, like *ramā* 'he threw' < **ramaya*, and the FSG elative *fuʿlā* < **fuʿlayV*) (Van Putten 2017). The realisation of III-*Y* roots was by and large different from that of **ā* and III-*W* roots (Al-Jallad 2015, 47, §3.2.3; 2017, 153–56, §5.1; Van Putten 2017), in both the pre-Islamic Levant, as well as the language of the Quran (Van Putten 2022, 133–35, §5.8). Spellings in the Quran reflect this, with the first two categories (**ā* and **awV*) being spelled with *ʾalif* and the third category (**ayV*) spelled almost ubiquitously with *yāʾ*. This spelling was, with one exception, maintained and adopted to write Classical Arabic, despite the fact that, in the predominant pronunciation tradition for Classical Arabic they are realised the same, namely *ā*.[13] This variation in pronunciation existed early

[12] Marijn van Putten (p.c.) informs me that زكوه is spelled زكاه more frequently than, e.g., صلوه is spelled صلاه, in the early Quranic MSS. Thus, the spelling of this word in Vat. Ar. 13 patterns with other early MSS evidence.

[13] The exception is that in Quranic (and frequently in early inscriptions and papyri), this sequence is spelled with a *yāʾ* even with a pronominal

on, and led to spellings of words from each of the categories in ways that are not characteristic of Quranic orthography, nor with what became normative in Classical Arabic practice. While spellings of the first two categories with *yāʾ* instead of *ʾalif* occur in Vat. Ar. 13, far greater in number are III-*Y* roots spelled with *ʾalif* instead of *yāʾ* / *ʾalif maqṣūrah bi-ṣūrat al-yāʾ*.

4.1. Spellings of Final *ā* < **ā* and < **awV*

Spellings of final *ā*, whether < **ā* (e.g., *hākaḏā* 'thus, in this way') or < **awV* (e.g., *daʿā* < **daʿawa* 'he invoked, invited') are almost always spelled with *ʾalif* in Vat. Ar. 13. This is to be expected, since, again, it is the case in the Quranic consonantal text. The spelling with *ʾalif* quickly became part of normative orthography in Classical Arabic MSS. Spellings of such words with *yāʾ* or *ʾalif maqṣūrah bi-ṣūrat al-yāʾ* are in general less common than the opposite (Blau 1966–1967, 82–83; Hopkins 1984, 14–16, §12), though they do occur. Examples, along with a discussion of the phonetic and phonological implications of the patterns in Vat. Ar. 13 will be discussed in Ch. 3, §2.0. In Hand C, *hākaḏā* 'thus, in this manner', is several times written هاكذى / هاكذي (e.g., on fol. 1v and 4v). We will discuss the distribution of spellings of the adverbs of manner in Ch. 4, §2.3.

4.2. Spellings of *ā* < **ayV*

I have counted approximately 303 instances of words from **ayV* roots in which the sequence was word-final (i.e., not followed by

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suffix, e.g., Q2.258 اتىه *ʾātā-hu* 'he gave him,' instead of later Classical orthography اتاه.

a pronominal suffix) in the Gospel portions of Vat. Ar. 13. Of those, 160 (53 percent) are spelled with final *ʾalif*, and 143 (47 percent) are spelled with the Quranic/Classical *yāʾ / ʾalif maqṣūrah bi-ṣūrat al-yāʾ*. While roughly even numerically, there are a number of factors that correlate with one or the other spelling. The first is scribal hand, which, as can be seen in Table 3, shows a three-way distinction between Hands A and B, which are roughly evenly split between the two spellings, Hand C, which virtually always writes such forms with final *ʾalif*, and Hand D, which almost always uses typical Quranic and Classical spellings.

Table 3: Spellings of **ayV* sequences by scribal hand

Hand	***yāʾ / ʾalif maqṣūrah bi-ṣūrat al-yāʾ***	***ʾalif***
A	82 (48%)	90 (52%)
B	20 (39%)	32 (61%)
C	1 (3%)	34 (97%)
D	40 (89%)	5 (11%)

We will witness this pattern wherein the earliest hands cluster together: Hand C is closest to other early Christian (and papyrological) practices and Hand D is the most classical, across grammatical categories as well.

Grammatical form also correlates with likelihood of one spelling over the other. For instance, verbs are frequently spelled with final *ʾalif*, mostly regardless of verbal form, although form II verbs are an exception, being mostly written with *yāʾ / ʾalif maqṣūrah bi-ṣūrat al-yāʾ*. Active verb data are given for each attested form in Table 4.

Table 4: Spellings of III-*Y/W* roots that would be spelled with *ʾalif maqṣūrah* according to Quranic and Classical orthography

Verb Form	***ʾalif maqṣūrah / yāʾ***	***ʾalif mamdūdah***
I	18 (22%)	64 (78%)
II	3 (75%)	1 (25%)
IV	3 (38%)	5 (62%)
V	1 (8%)	12 (92%)
VI	0	12 (100%)
VIII	2 (33%)	4 (67%)
X	1 (100%)	0

Each of the three form II spellings with *yāʾ / ʾalif maqṣūrah bi-ṣūrat al-yāʾ* occur in the same verb, صلّى 'he prayed' (fols 53r, 72r), whereas the single case of a form II verb spelled with final *ʾalif* is in a portion copied by Hand C, who spells *sammā* 'he named' as سما (fol. 4v). Passive verbs likewise attest the same distribution, with form I and form IV overwhelmingly spelled with final *ʾalif*, and the one passive of form II spelled with *yāʾ*.

Table 5: Spellings of passive imperfects of III-*Y* roots

Verb Form	***ʾalif maqṣūrah / yāʾ***	***ʾalif mamdūdah***
I	6 (18%)	27 (82%)
II	1 (100%)	0
IV	0	4 (100%)

Nouns and particles, on the other hand, are much more likely to be spelled with *yāʾ / ʾalif maqṣūrah bi-ṣūrat al-yāʾ*. Of the 139 nominal and particle forms that derive from **ay(V)* sequences, 108 (82 percent) are spelled with *yāʾ / ʾalif maqṣūrah bi-ṣūrat al-yāʾ*. These include nouns that are etymologically III-*Y*, e.g., قري 'villages' (fol. 65r), فتي 'youth' (fol. 29v), and قوي 'powers' (fol. 70r), as well as nominal patterns with a suffixed *ā* < **-ayV*, such as بشري 'Gospel' (fol. 41r), يمني 'right (FSG)' (fol. 4v), and اخرى 'other (FSG)' (fol. 61r). Likewise included are nouns

from derived stems, such as passive participles, e.g., منتهى 'the end' (fol. 42v) and ملقىً 'meeting place' (fol. 11v). In the case of two proper names, *mūsā* (< **mūsay*) 'Moses' and *yūsā* (< **yūsay*) 'Joses/Joseph' (a brother of Jesus), spellings with *yāʾ* / *ʾalif maqṣūrah bi-ṣūrat al-yāʾ* are ubiquitous, e.g., موسي / موسى (fol. 31r) and يوسي / يوسى (fol. 48v). Several particles that end in *ā* < **ay(V)* and are spelled with *yāʾ* / *ʾalif maqṣūrah bi-ṣūrat al-yāʾ* include متى 'when?' (fol. 45v) and عسى 'perhaps' (fol. 27v). This is very reminiscent of modern *Qəltu* dialects of Mesopotamia, in which final **ayV* sequences are regularly *ē* (or *ī*) on nouns, but on verbs are *ā* (Van Putten 2023a).

5.0. *Tāʾ marbūṭah* versus *tāʾ maftūḥah*

One of the characteristics of Arabic orthography is identical spelling of the FSG ending—with the consonant *hāʾ*—in both the absolute and construct state. This was not the case in the Nabataean orthography from which the Arabic one developed, but rather appears to have been a non-phonetic scribal development of the Ḥiǧāzī spelling that was underway but not complete when the Quran was set down in writing (Van Putten 2023b, 114–15, §3.4). Eventually, this word-final *hāʾ* on FSG nouns was written with two dots to indicate the dual pronunciation, pausal *-ah* and non-pausal *-at*, and called *tāʾ marbūṭah* 'tied *tā*ʾ'. While the *hāʾ* instead of *tāʾ* spelling convention was already very common in the Quran, still about 22 percent of FSG nouns in construct in the Quran's consonantal text are spelled, as in Nabataean orthography, with the *tāʾ maftūḥah* (Van Putten and Stokes 2018, 164). The shift of writing word-final *-ah* and *-at* with *hāʾ* regardless of

realisation, an orthographic Ḥiǧāzism, continued to spread, but the writing with *tāʾ* held on in some phrases (e.g., رحمت الله *raḥmat allāh* 'the mercy of God'). Hopkins (1984, 44–46, §47.a–b) notes that it is "not uncommon," and is especially common in phrases like *raḥmat allāh* 'the mercy of God', spelled رحمت الله. Blau (1966–1967, 116, §24.2), on the other hand, notes only a few scattered examples of *tāʾ* (called *tāʾ maftūḥah* 'open *tā*") in the early Christian MSS to which he had access.

Vat. Ar. 13 patterns with the other Christian Arabic MSS in attesting only a handful of examples, all of which are in construct. The clear examples I have noted in the Gospels include ايت ساعه 'which hour' (fol. 43r), ابنت هيروذيا 'the daughter of Herodia' (fol. 83v), and a third example—قساوت قلوبكم 'the hardness of your hearts'—in text added in the margin of fol. 31r, which the scribe presumably omitted in error from the main text. Note that the *tāʾ marbūṭah* in each scribal hand, including Hand D, is identical to the final *hāʾ*; the convention of adding the two dots of the *tāʾ* is not attested in the MS. The convention is not attested in the contemporaneous Classical MS Or. 298 (9th/10th century CE), nor the likely 10th-century CE MS Garrett 598, but is attested, though inconsistently, in Ar 3315 (12th/13th century CE).

6.0. Spellings of **āʾV* Sequences

We have already noted that since the Ḥiǧāzī orthography did not have a dedicated letter for expressing the glottal stop, and the fact that the *hamzah* grapheme begins to be used in only the 9th CE, and even then, only irregularly, it is often impossible to determine in what phonetic contexts, if any, the glottal stop was

intended by scribes of early MSS. In some cases, e.g., when the *ʾalif* is consistently omitted, we can surmise that the scribe intended to write a form that lacked it. As we will see in Ch. 3, such spellings by omission occur in Vat. Ar. 13. Another category relevant to a discussion of the orthographic practices attested in the MS includes the combination of letters to spell sequences with an etymological glottal stop. Specifically, in Vat. Ar. 13, the combination of etymological *ā* + glottal stop attests several orthographic strategies known from other MSS that deserve discussion. We will begin with places with word-internal **āʾV*, followed by (orthographically) word-final cases.

6.1. Word-Internal **āʾV*

The most common example of this sequence occurs with the active participles of II-*Y/W* and II-ʾ roots, which are spelled as expect, i.e., with اي, e.g., القايل 'the one who said' (fol. 2r *et passim*). The variation is mostly attested in other sequences, especially **āʾā*. These etymological sequences are spelled in three different ways in Vat. Ar. 13: (1) the combination of *ʾalif* + *yāʾ* + *ʾalif* ايا, which is primarily associated with form VI verbs and other derived nominal forms from the root **RʾY* and occurs in Hands A, B, and C; (2) with a single *ʾalif* ا; or (3) by means of two consecutive *ʾalif*s اا. The spelling convention with consecutive *ʾalif*s is attested in several scribal hands, but Hand D uses it to spell only *tarāʾā / yatarāʾā*, while Hand C uses strategy (1), and Hand A uses both (1) and (3). I have noted only one instance of *āʾā* spelled with a single *ʾalif*, i.e., strategy (2).

6.1.1. Combination of *ʾalif* + *yāʾ* + *ʾalif*

(19) وترايا له في الرويا (1v, Hand C)
w-trʾyʾ l-h fy ʾl-rwyʾ
'And he [an angel] appeared to him [Joseph] in the vision'

(20) فان باسى شيطايا يترايا له (28v, Hand A)
f-ʾn b-ʾbn-y šyṭʾyʾ [šyṭʾnʾ][14] *ytrʾyʾ l-h*
'Because my son is possessed by a demon that appeared to him'

(21) تطهرون خارج اجسادكم لمراياه الناس (40r, Hand A)
tṭhrwn ḫʾrǧ ʾǧsʾd-km l-mrʾyʾh ʾl-nʾs
'You clean the outside of your bodies to deceive the people'

6.1.2. Single *ʾalif*

(22) ارحمنا وترافٔ علينا يا سيدنا (34r, Hand A)
ʾrḥm-nʾ w-trʾf ʿly-nʾ yʾ syd-nʾ
'Have mercy on us and show compassion to us, our master!'

6.1.3. Consecutive *ʾalifs*

(23) ارحمنى وتراافٔ على (28v, Hand A)
ʾrḥm-ny w-trʾʾʾf ʿly
'Have mercy on me and show me compassion'

(24) فراا لهم موسى وايليا (27v, Hand A)
f-trʾʾʾ l-hm mwsy w-ʾylyʾ
'Then Moses and Elijah appeared to them'

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[14] Here and throughout, when a word is pointed in a way that I have interpreted as a mis-pointing, I provide the transliteration as it is in the text followed by my interpretation of the intended word between brackets [].

(25) ليتناول رداه (42r)
l-ytnʾwl rdʾʾ-h
‘In order to get his cloak’

(26) فترآا ملك من السمآءِ ليقوّيهِ وَيشجعه (53r, Hand D)
f-trāʾā mlk mn ʾl-smāʾi l-yqwwy-hi w-yšǧʿ-h
‘Then an angel from heaven appeared to strengthen and encourage him’

Relatedly, **āʾū* sequences in the root *RʾY* are spelled with the combination *ʾalif* + *yāʾ* + *wāw* ايو in Hands A and C, but with only *ʾalif* + *wāw* in Hand D. Beyond of this root, the combination *ʾalif* + consecutive *wāw*s is used.

(27) الويل لكم ايها الكتبه والاحبار المرايون (40r, Hand A)
ʾl-wyl l-km ʾyhʾ ʾl-ktbh w-ʾl-ʾḥbʾr ʾl-mrʾywn
‘Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites’

(28) ان الصخره التى ردلها الساوون هى صارت ركن البنا (36r, Hand A)
ʾn ʾl-ṣḫrh ʾlty rdl-hʾ ʾl-bnʾwwn hy ṣʾrt rkn ʾl-bnʾ
‘The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone’

(29) كما يصنع المراوون (5v, Hand C)
kmʾ yṣnʿ ʾl-mrʾwwn
‘As the hypocrites do’

(30) انطروا في صدقاتكم لا تفعلوها قدام الناس لان لا ترايونهم (5v, Hand C)
ʾnẓrwʾ fy ṣdqʾt-km lʾ tfʿlw-hʾ qdʾm ʾl-nʾs l-ʾn lʾ trʾywn-hm
‘Beware in your almsgiving not to do it in front of people so that you do not try to make them see [hypocritically]’

(31) فترأُوا لناسٍ كثيرين (48v, Hand D)
f-trʾūʾ l-nʾsin kṯyryn
‘And they appeared to many people’

Several of these spellings differ from the orthographic conventions that eventually became part of normative Classical Arabic. Both strategies (1) and (3) above are attested in other early Christian Arabic MSS (Blau 1966–1967, 93–95), as well as the early papyri (Hopkins 1984, 20, 27). Both scholars interpreted strategy (1) as evidence for the loss of the glottal stop and a shift ʾ > *y*, presumably resulting in *tarāyā / yatarāyā*, or *bannāwūn* in place of *bannāʾūn* (Blau 1966–1967, 94–95; Hopkins 1984, 27). Strategy (3), with two consecutive *ʾalif*s, on the other hand, has traditionally been interpreted as evidence for a non-standard attempt to represent the glottal stop (Blau 1966–1967, 85–86, §11.1.1; Hopkins 1984, 20), though Knutsson (1974, 77) suggests that such spellings reflect only underlying *ā*. It is not clear, however, why this would not simply be written امراه, and indeed his own observation that the same scribe alternates امرااه with امرآه rather affirms the use of the former to represent a glottal stop, since the *maddah* is frequently used across corpora, including Classical Arabic MSS, to indicate the presence of the glottal stop, whether or not the *hamzah* grapheme is used.[15]

Regarding spellings with the *y* or *w* glides, the supposition that such spellings indicate the loss of the glottal stop in these contexts is *prima facie* possible; after all, the evidence from the Quranic consonantal text is, with one or two exceptions, consistent with the well-known reports that the dialects of the Ḥiǧāz

[15] For example, in Ar 3315 (*Kitāb al-Fihrist*, likely 11th century CE), one spelling variant of *qirāʾah* 'a reading' is قرآة (fol. 10r). For a discussion of the *maddah*, see Van Putten (2021), and for many examples in Arabic Gospel MSS, see Stokes (2022).

had lost the glottal stop (Van Putten 2018b). However, while this does indeed seem the likeliest interpretation, it is important to at least mention another possibility, namely that the combination of اي attested in these MSS is related to the graphemically identical digraph, attested in Quranic MSS, which is clearly used to write a non-word-initial glottal stop (Van Putten 2018b, 109–11, §8; Al-Jallad 2021; examples from Al-Jallad 2021, 3–4): جاىت **ǧiʾtu* 'I came', باىته **bi-ʾāyāti-hu* 'by his signs', and السواى **al-sūʾa* 'the evil'. The main difference between the contexts in which the digraph is used in Quranic contexts and in Vat. Ar. 13 is that in the Quran it occurs only in high vowel contexts, whereas here it does not. It is possible, though, that its usage to write word-medial glottal stop was retained, but that its original distribution was lost. Evidence for the phonetic realisation behind this spelling will be further discussed in Ch. 3, §1.0 below.

Strategy (3) above, namely the use of consecutive *ʾalif*s to represent a glottal stop, while marginal in Vat. Ar. 13, is attested not only in the Christian and early papyrological corpora, but also in Classical MSS as well, typically to write **āʾa* and **āʾā*, but also occasionally **CʾC̄* and, in rare cases, even **aʾa*. It is attested in Ar 3315, the possibly 11th-century CE MS copy of Ibn al-Nadīm's *Kitāb al-Fihrist*, to write both **āʾa*, e.g., القراءة *al-qirāʾah* 'the reading' (fol. 9v) and **āʾā*, e.g., قراءات 'the readings' (fol. 10r), along with **CʾC̄*, e.g., in قراءان *qurʾān* (fol. 17v). Writing *āʾa* in this way is a direct parallel with Vat. Ar. 13's تراءف, which is most likely a form VI verb from *RʾF*, i.e., *tarāʾaf* 'he felt compassion', but also **āʾa*, e.g., رداءه *ridāʾa-h(u)* 'his cloak', and **aʾā*, e.g., مآدب *maʾādib* 'banquets' (fol. 69r). The sequence *āʾāt*, i.e., where the

final morpheme is the FPL ending, is in fact frequently spelled with just two *ʾalif*s, since, as we have already seen, the *hamzah* grapheme was optional in many cases. Another Classical MS in which such spellings occur regularly is Ar 3051, a MS of Ibn Ḫālawayh's *Kitāb al-Badīʿ* dating to 980 CE, where the same form is attested, e.g., هاات *hāʾāt* 'the *hā*'s' (fol. 15v).

Vat. Ar. 13 attests multiple orthographic variants for writing word-internal etymological glottal stop sequences. Importantly, while neither orthographic practice becomes normative in later Classical Arabic MSS, both spellings are used in MSS of texts that are otherwise universally considered Classical. Here again we see evolution in what was typical reflected in various scribal hands that make up Vat. Ar. 13.

6.2. Word-Final **āʾV*

Unlike word-internal **āʾV* sequences, spellings of word-final **āʾV*[16] in Vat. Ar. 13 are mostly consistent across scribal hands, with *ʾalif* constituting the majority of cases. Exceptions are mostly of two kinds: (1) the spelling of the plural demonstrative pronoun, which is spelled variously in Hands A and B as هاولي / هاولى, as هولاي / هولاى, or هاولا / هولا; and (2) nouns ending in **āʾV*, which are spelled either اي or ي. The latter category will occupy

[16] These sequences were most likely **āyV* in Proto-Semitic and, based on evidence from pre-Islamic inscriptions (e.g., Safaitic; see Al-Jallad 2015, 65) and modern Arabic dialects, were likely still realised thus in Proto-Arabic (Van Putten 2018a, 207–9, §2.2). The spellings here suggest that the **āy* > **āʾ* shift characterised the phonologies of Scribes A and B.

our focus here; the plural demonstrative will be discussed in Ch. 4 below.

A few nouns ending in **āʾV* written with a final *yāʾ / ʾalif maqṣūrah bi-ṣūrat al-yāʾ* occur in portions copied by Hands A and C. The most common of these is the noun *iftirāʾ* 'blasphemy', which occurs by my count at least six times, all in Hand A sections of the MS, and in each case is spelled with a final *yāʾ / ʾalif maqṣūrah bi-ṣūrat al-yāʾ*, e.g., افترى / افتري (see examples on fols 15v, 18v, 25r, 57v). The noun **ʿaḏrāʾ* 'virgin' is likewise written with a final *yāʾ / ʾalif maqṣūrah bi-ṣūrat al-yāʾ*, this time in a section of the MS copied by Hand C, who spells it العدرى (fol. 1v). These few forms constitute atypical spellings of this phonetic sequence in the context of Vat. Ar. 13, where the spelling is otherwise consistently *ʾalif* in Hands A, B, and C, and a combination of *ʾalif* + *maddah* and/or *hamzah* in Hand D.

(32) ابتدا (41v, Hand A)
ʾbtdʾ
Classical /ibtidāʾ/ 'beginning'

(33) الرحا (43r, Hand A)
ʾl-rǧʾ
Classical /ar-riǧāʾ/ 'the request; please'

(34) عظما (66v, Hand B)
ʿẓmʾ
Classical /ʿuẓamāʾ/ 'chief (priests)'

(35) انفصا (74v, Hand B)
ʾnqḍʾ
Classical /ʾinqiḍāʾ/ 'end (of the present age)'

(36) القصا (4v, Hand C)
ʾl-qḍʾ
Classical /al-qaḍāʾ/ ‘the judgment’

(37) رحما (4r, Hand C)
rḥmʾ
Classical /ruḥamāʾ/ ‘the merciful ones’

(38) الانبياَ (8v, Hand D)
ʾl-nbyāʾ
Classical /al-ʾanbiyāʾ/ ‘the prophets’

(39) السماَءِ (7r, Hand D)
ʾl-smāʾi
Classical /as-samāʾi/ ‘heaven’

(40) بازاَءِ (54r, Hand D)
b-ʾzāʾi
Classical /bi-ʾizāʾi/ ‘in front of’

These could simply be orthographic variants with no implication whatsoever for phonetic realisation (which will be discussed in Ch. 3 below), and indeed such spellings are attested in other early Islamic-era corpora, and from a number of roots. Christian corpus examples include: استيلى ‘dominion’, انقضى ‘end’, بردى ‘with a cloak’ (Blau 1966–1967, 90, §11.3.6.2). Examples from early Islamic-era papyri include: كرى ‘rent’, استيفى ‘full receipt’, and feminine singular colours like حمرى ‘red (FSG)’ and سودى ‘black (FSG)’ (Blau 1984, 23, §21.b). Nevertheless, it is important to note the distribution here in Vat. Ar. 13: spellings of **āʾV* with *yāʾ / ʾalif maqṣūrah bi-ṣūrat al-yāʾ* occur only when the immediately-preceding consonant is *r*. *R*-adjacency also seems to play some role in the orthographic representation of final **ā*, whether it is spelled with *ʾalif* or *yāʾ / ʾalif maqṣūrah bi-ṣūrat al-*

yāʾ. As we have already seen, nouns and particles are much more likely to exhibit *yāʾ / ʾalif maqṣūrah bi-ṣūrat al-yāʾ* spellings than verbs. Within this class, nouns ending in a final *ā* that is *r*-adjacent are especially likely to be spelled this way, with 21/22 cases (96 percent) spelled with *yāʾ / ʾalif maqṣūrah bi-ṣūrat al-yāʾ*; all other roots attest this spelling in 89/129 (75 percent) of instances. This difference is significant via a Fisher's exact test (p = .0085). Further, the spellings that Blau and Hopkins report are not fully contextualised, but many of the examples are either *r*-adjacent forms as here, are preceded by an *i*-class vowel, or are syntactically genitive. So, it is possible that these spellings reflect the fronting (Arabic *ʾimālah*) of **ā* when preceded by either *r*, regardless of case, or in the context of an *i*-class vowel, whether due to the stem (i.e., *ifti'āl* form VIII *maṣdar*s) or case.

Despite being atypical of what eventually became normative Classical Arabic, in addition to the generalised *ʾimālah* discussed above, various types of *r*-adjacent *ʾimālah* occur in several Quranic *qirāʾāt*. In ʾAbū ʿAmr's reading tradition, any *r*-adjacent final *-ā* is realised as *ē*, but otherwise no *ʾimālah* occurs, e.g., *ḏikrē* 'memory', but *ramā* 'he threw' (Van Putten 2026, §1.6.3.2). A more limited kind of *r*-adjacent *ʾimālah* among Quranic readers is limited to **āri* sequences when the final *i* is the genitive case marker, rather than, e.g., a shortened form of the 1CSG suffix *-ī* 'my'. This occurs also in ʾAbū ʿAmr's reading tradition, as well as al-Dūrī's transmission of Al-Kisāʾī. Warš ʿan Nāfiʿ has the same conditioning, but with a slightly less fronted realisation (like /ǟ/): *an-nahǟri* (instead of *an-nahāri*) and *qarǟrin* (instead of

qarārin), but *al-ǧawārī / al-ǧawāri* (instead of *al-ǧawā̄ri*) (Van Putten 2026, §1.6.3.3). *R*-adjacent *ʾimālah* is even attested in isolated instances in other reading traditions that do not otherwise attest *ʾimālah*, such as the singular occurrence in Ḥafṣ ʿan ʿĀṣim's reading of مجريها *maǧrē-hā* 'its course' (Q11.41).

While these kinds of *ʾimālah* do not involve final **āʾV* sequences as far as I am aware, it is not unreasonable to surmise that such patterns of *ʾimālah* could have existed. It is unlikely to be coincidence that *r*-adjacency is orthographically tied to the spellings of these final **ā* (< **ayV*) and **āʾV* contexts with *yāʾ / ʾalif maqṣūrah bi-ṣūrat al-yāʾ* in Vat. Ar. 13. Thus, we can posit the possibility of underlying *rēʾ*, at least in the register or variety for which the orthographic practices attested in Vat. Ar. 13 developed. Alternatively, it is possible that a word-final glottal stop was lost in this context, leading to a merger with **ā*, and thus the same realisation, i.e., *ē*. Alternatively, the spelling with *yāʾ / ʾalif maqṣūrah bi-ṣūrat al-yāʾ* might reflect something like *āy(i)*.

Whatever the case regarding Vat. Ar. 13, the minority spellings from the papyri and Christian corpus, if truly random, should be viewed the way we view the *ʾalif maqṣūrah bi-ṣūrat al-yāʾ* and *ʾalif* spellings of **ā* in the same corpora. These two spellings were originally distributed based on etymological differences due to distinct phonetic realisations (*ē* versus *ā*, in this case). This distinction, however, was eventually lost in many varieties, including in normative Classical Arabic. This led to spellings of *ā*, usually with *ʾalif*, but alternating with *yāʾ / ʾalif maqṣūrah bi-ṣūrat al-yāʾ*, whether < **ayV* or < **awV*. Spellings of final *āʾV* sequences with *ʾalif* or *yāʾ* (or *ʾalif* + *yāʾ*) may likewise

have originally reflected an early orthographic distinction intended to represent *ʾimālah* based on genitive/non-genitive, or *r*-adjacency. Once the phonetic peculiarities were lost, however, the spellings quickly became disconnected from the original phonetic distinctions. They became for a time mere orthographic variants that were lost completely once the more ubiquitous spelling practices that became associated with Classical orthography had spread sufficiently.

7.0. Spelling of **raʾaya* 'he saw'

The spelling of Classical *raʾā* in early Arabic writing varied considerably, especially in the perfect conjugation. The 3MSG in the Quranic consonantal text is را, with the exception of Q53.7, where the classical spelling راى is attested. 1st and 2nd person singular spellings in early Quranic MSS are typically either رايت or ريت. The evidence suggests an underlying realisation of 3MSG /rāʾ/ and 1st and 2nd singular /rāyt/ or /raʾayt/ (Van Putten 2022, 138, §5.11). In the early papyri, spellings are typically either classical راى or Quranic را (Hopkins 1984, 29, §25b). In the Christian corpus, these spellings occur alongside yet another variant, namely ري / رى (Blau 1966–1967, 97–98, §11.4.2.1).[17] In Vat. Ar. 13, the majority of instances are spelled classically, i.e., راي / راى and 1st and 2nd رايت (on, e.g., fols 26r and 28r). However, in one

[17] For this form, cf. Ḥamzah and Al-Sūsī ʿan ʾAbī ʿAmr, both of whom read this as *reʾē*. Perhaps the form رى / ري originally reflected **reʾē* > *rē* with the loss of intervocalic glottal stop. On this, see further Ch. 3, §2.0 below.

place, Hand B writes 3MSG ري on fol. 66v. No examples of Quranic 3MSG را occur in the Gospel portions of Vat. Ar. 13.

8.0. *ʾAlif al-Wiqāyah*

The *ʾalif al-wiqāyah* refers to the use of a non-phonetic *ʾalif*, which in late pre-Islamic, Quranic, and early Islamic-era inscriptions and papyri marked word-final *-ū* or *-aw* sequences, whether nominal or verbal, singular or plural (Van Putten 2023b, 115, §3.5). It did not, however, otherwise mark word-final consonantal *w*, such as the sequences *-āw* or *-uww*. Its distribution was thus based on the underlying phonetics of the sequence. This differs from what eventually became normative in Classical Arabic orthography, where the *ʾalif al-wiqāyah* was used to mark the word-final plural suffixes *-ū* and *-aw* only on verbs, but not nouns. In Vat. Ar. 13, *ʾalif al-wiqāyah* is used occasionally on nouns, though not with the regularity that characterises the Quranic MSS, e.g., معلموا السنه *mʿlmwʾ ʾl-snh* 'the teachers of the tradition' (fol. 78r). It further occurs in one instance following word-final **ūʾ*, البروا (fol. 86r, Hand A). Its occurrence here, if not reflecting a purely orthographic practice, may suggest that the glottal stop was realised in this word, i.e., *burūʾ* 'innocence', rather than *burūw / buruww*. Indeed, it is possible to read the example as a rare case of *ʾalif* to spell the glottal stop. There are a few further examples of this use of the *ʾalif*, including, e.g., يكتاب to spell **yaktaʾib* 'he despairs' (fol. 71v, Hand B), instead of يكتيب. Elsewhere, though, the same word is spelled with the *ʾalif al-wiqāyah* (fol. 78r, where it is spelled البرو by the same hand), so it is difficult to say more

than that spelling variation was common in such sequences in the case of nouns.

The *ʾalif al-wiqāyah* is common to mark word-final *ū* and *aw* on verbs, including on singular verbs, e.g., لم ات لادعوا *lm ʾt l-ʾdʿwʾ*... 'I have not come to call...' (fol. 79r). Its absence is not rare, however, whether the underlying is presumably *-ū* or *-aw*, and is fairly common in portions of the MS produced by Hand B.

(41) لانهم علمو انه انما عناهم بهذا (68r, Hand B)
l-ʾn-hm ʿlmw ʾn-h ʾnmʾ ʿnʾ-hm b-hḏʾ
'For they knew that he meant them by this [what he said]'

(42) فاعرفو المثل واعتبرو به (70v, Hand B)
f-ʾʿrfw ʾl-mṯl w-ʾʿtbrw b-h
'Then know this parable and consider it'

(43) الذين اتو من جميع قري يهوذ{ا} والجليل واوريشلم (78r, Hand A)
ʾlḏyn ʾtw mn ǧmyʿ qry yhwḏ{ʾ} w-ʾl-ǧlyl w-ʾwryšlm
'Those who came from all the villages of Judah, the Galilee, and Jerusalem'

The most frequent root where *ʾalif al-wiqāyah* is omitted on 3MPL forms is *RʾY*, which is spelled راو by Hands A and C.

(44) فلما راو النجم فرحوا فرحا شديدا ودخلوا البيت فراو الصبي مع مريم امه (1v–2r, Hand C)
f-lmʾ rʾw ʾl-nǧm frḥwʾ frḥʾ šdydʾ w-dḫlwʾ ʾl-byt f-rʾw ʾl-ṣby mʿ mrym ʾm-h
'Then when they saw the star they rejoiced greatly, then they entered the house and saw the boy with Mary, his mother'

(45) حعل يقدم اليهم ويوصيهم ويقول الا يخبروا احدا بما راو وعاينوا (61r, Hand A)

> *ǧʿl ytqdm ʾly-hm w-ywṣy-hm w-yqwl ʾlʾ yḫbrwʾ ʾḥdʾ b-mʾ rʾw w-ʿʾynwʾ*
> ‘He began ordering them and commanding them not to tell anyone what they had seen and witnessed’

This is of course the spelling that is attested in the Quran, where final *-āw* was not typically spelled with *ʾalif al-wiqāyah*. The spelling of *ʾalif al-wiqāyah* in Vat. Ar. 13 represents a transition from Quranic/early-Islamic orthographic practices to the Classical practice of only marking MPL verbal endings.

CHAPTER 3. PHONETICS AND PHONOLOGY

In this chapter, we will look at some cases where, based on the orthographic discussion in Ch. 2, it is reasonable to infer something of the phonetics and/or phonology of the linguistic variety (or varieties) reflected in the MS. This includes especially places in which an etymological glottal stop occurred. Finally, a few pieces of evidence for mergers of III-*Y* and III-*W* roots, as well as a few other phonetic processes, will be discussed.

1.0. The Glottal Stop

The absence of the glottal stop already in the pre-Islamic dialects of the Ḥiǧāz is well known and long acknowledged among scholars (Rabin 1951, 131–45; Blau 1966–1967, 84, §11; Hopkins 1984, 19–20, §19). However, at the same time, most of the relevant scholars have assumed that while this is reflected in the orthography—in which no dedicated grapheme for the glottal stop exists—that it was not true of the language of the Quran, nor a feature typical of Classical Arabic, however defined (Rabin 1951; Blau 1966–1967, 84, §11.1; Zwettler 1978; Hopkins 1984, 19). Indeed, most scholarship has operated, often implicitly, under the assumption that the realisation of the *hamzah* was uniform in the *ʿArabiyyah*, or prestige register, and that any scribe attempting to write Arabic would at least feign an attempt at representing it. This assumption undergirds Blau's study of the early Christian Arabic corpus (1966–1967, 83–121, §§11–24.4), where the

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absence of the *hamzah* is "presumably to be interpreted as reflecting an ancient orthographic habit *preserved also through NA* [= Neo-Arabic] *influence* (2002, 32, §17, emphasis mine). Hopkins begins his discussion of the glottal stop by asserting that its absence is "a phenomenon common to *all non-Classical varieties* of Arabic" (1984, 19, emphasis mine). Indeed, most work on Middle Arabic has adopted this position (cf. Grand'Henry 2006, 384, §1.2; Wagner 2010, 50–52, §4.3.8) even more explicitly than Blau and Hopkins formulated it, as e.g., when Bengtsson states that "[i]n CA [= Classical Arabic] the phoneme /ʾ/ is stable in all positions" (1995, 108, §3.2.5), and continues to be the explicit position of scholars such that Monferrer-Sala likewise asserts that "unlike Classical Arabic, *in which the phoneme hamza /ʾ/ is stable in all positions*, in Neo-Arabic it is only realised in initial position" (2015, 347, §1.4, emphasis mine).

The situation is not so simple, however. There is in fact significant Classical precedent for the dropping of *hamzah* in various phonetic contexts. First, it should be remembered that, as Marijn van Putten has shown, orthographic patterns and internal evidence (e.g., from rhyme) suggest that the language behind the Quranic consonantal text lacked the glottal stop in most phonetic contexts, retaining it only in word-final *-*āʾV* contexts (Van Putten 2018b; 2022, 121). As has been noted already, the loss was generally attributed to tribes of the Ḥiǧāz, the dialects of which quite possibly formed an early (and prestigious) layer during the ʾUmayyad period in the Levant (Al-Jallad 2020a, 63–67). Even for the *ʿArabiyyah* tradition, the early grammarians considered dropping the *hamzah* acceptable in general, especially when

there was uncertainty over whether it was etymological or not (2022, 168–69, §6.5). Additionally, the Quranic *qirāʾāt* traditions attest a number of *hamzah* realisation patterns, even when it was clearly etymological. ʾAbū Ǧaʿfar, for example, dropped pre-consonantal *hamzah*, lengthening the preceding short vowel: *muʾminūna* > *mūminūna* 'believers', *šiʾta* > *šīta* 'you wish', *yaʾkulu* > *yākulu* 'he eats' (Van Putten 2022, 156). According to the transmission of al-ʾAzraq, Warš ʿan Nāfiʿ dropped pre-consonantal and intervocalic *hamzah*, but only when it was the first consonant of the root: *muʾminūna* > *mūminūna* 'believers', *yaʾḫuḏu* > *yāḫuḏu* 'he takes', *yuʾaḫḫiru* > *yuwaḫḫiru* 'he delays someone', but *biʾsa* 'he was miserable' and *ǧiʾtā* 'you (MSG) came' not ***bīsa* and ***ǧīta* (Van Putten 2022, 157). Finally, in contexts where a word beginning with a *hamzah* is preceded by a word that ends in a consonant (Arabic *naql*), Warš ʿan Nāfiʿ regularly dropped the *hamzah*: *man ʾaslama* > *manaslama* 'the one who submitted'. And Warš's reading tradition remains to this day prestigious across North Africa, not only in the recitation of the Quran, but also in other religious texts, such as Al-Jazūlī's Islamic prayer book, *Dalāʾil Al-Ḫayrāt* (Van Putten 2021). Thus, while the pattern over time in the pronunciation of Classical Arabic maximised conservatism, this was not, and indeed is still not always the case, and there is little basis for retrojecting this priority onto early Islamic-era MSS.

As discussed in Ch. 2, §1.0, many previous analyses of the orthography of early papyrological and manuscript corpora make anachronistic assumptions about the existence, and thereafter the obligatoriness, of the use of the *hamzah* such that its absence was

held to indicate the absence of the glottal stop. Instead, we saw that the *hamzah* belonged to the same level of the orthography as other vocalisations, which was rarely total or obligatory. Relatedly, the assumption of the feature as binary—either present or absent where etymological—is likewise too categorical. It is indeed possible for a variety to have retained the glottal stop in one place but not others, as in the *qirāʾāt* discussed above. We should therefore consider evidence for a glottal stop in each phonetic context, rather than allowing evidence for its presence or absence in one context to incline us to see the same in others.

Before we move to a discussion of the evidence for the glottal stop, it should be acknowledged here that the only type of evidence for its realisation in the portions produced by Hands A, B, and C is orthography. This type of evidence is, as we have already seen, opaque and open to multiple possible interpretations. Where little to no data exists for a particular context, I prefer to leave the question open. Most of the deductions below are based on spellings that, while rarely ubiquitous, are nevertheless sufficiently attested to be meaningful. It is of course not certain whether the way this text was written reflected the vernacular realisations of the various scribes, or rather is primarily an orthography based on a non-native variety that the scribes found prestigious. I remain neutral on this point; however, I do not find it a meaningless question because, despite the fact that the manuscript was likely produced, and certainly housed, in a monastery, there is good evidence that these translations were used in services, whether solely monastic or also in local communities (Griffith 1997, 26–29).

Spellings of the glottal stop in various phonetic contexts differ, sometimes within a single hand, and frequently across hands. Table 6 provides most of the relevant examples for our discussion. Note that spellings that are ubiquitous in the early corpora, and/or where there is no variation across hands, are not included here since very little can be deduced from such spellings. Reconstructed readings will be discussed in the section to follow.

Table 6: Spellings of etymological glottal stop sequences across scribal hands

Context	**Spelling (Hand)**	**Reconstruction**
*#ʾi	ايذن (AB) اذن (ABCD)	/ʾiḏan/ ‘then, therefore’
*ʾiʾC	ايذن (A)	/ʾīḏan/ ‘permit! (MSG)’
>	ايتونى (B)	/ʾītūnī/ ‘bring (MPL) to me!’
ʾīC	ايتمر (B)	/ītamar/ ‘they deliberated’
*iʾa	ليلا (AD)	/li-ʾallā/ ‘so that not’
	برات (A)	/buriʾat/ ‘she was healed’
	ريسا (A)	/riʾasā(ʾ)/ or /riyasā(ʾ)/ ‘chief priests’
*iʾū	يستهزيوا/يستهزيون (AD)	/yVstahziʾūn/ ‘they mock’
	ممتليون (A)	/mumtaliʾūn/ ‘full (MPL)’
	متكيون (B)	/muttakiʾūn/ ‘reclining (MPL)’
	خاطيون (A)	/ḫāṭiʾūn/ ‘sinners (M)’
	استهزوا (D)	/vstahzū/ ‘mock! (MSG)’
*iʾā	سيات (A)	/sayyiʾāt/ or /sayyiyāt/ ‘bad things’
*iʾī	خاطيين (B)	/ḫāṭiʾīn/ ‘sinners (M)’
*uʾū	روس (AC)	/rūs/ or /ruʾūs/ ‘heads’
	رووس (A)	/ruʾūs/ ‘heads’
	كووس (A)	/kuʾūs/ ‘cups’

Context	Spelling (Hand)	Reconstruction
**uʾy*	رويا (AC)	/ruʾyā/ or /rūyā/ ‘vision’
	ريا(C)	/ruʾyā/ or /riyyā/ ‘vision’
**aʾC*	استنوا (A)	/vstan(n)ū/ ‘tarry! (MPL)’
	قراتم (ABCD)	/qaraʾtum/, /qarātum/ ‘you have read (MPL)’
**aʾa*	بدت (AB)	/badat/ ‘she began’
	نشت (A)	/našat/ ‘it grew’
	امتلت (A)	/Vmtalat/ ‘she/it was filled’
	رف (A)	/rāf/, /raf/ ‘he was compassionate’
	امراه (ABCD)	/Vmraʾah/, /Vmrāh/ ‘a woman’
	هزات (C)	/hazaʾat/, /hazāt/ ‘she shook’
**aʾu*	ساودي (A)	/sa-ʾuaddī/, /sa-ʾuwaddī/ ‘I will carry out’
	يقري (B)	/yVqrē/ ‘he reads’
	يقرا (ACD)	/yuqraʾ/, /yuqrā/ ‘it is read’
**aʾi*	لاين (A)	/la-ʾin/, /layin/ ‘if’
	نطماين (A)	/nVṭmaʾinn(a)/ ‘we feel confident’
	يكتاب (B)	/yVktaʾib/ ‘he is downcast’
	مكتيب (B)	/muktaʾib/, /muktayib/ ‘downcast (MSG)’
**aʾā*	راي (ABCD)	/raʾā/, /rāy/ ‘he saw’
	ري (B)	/ray/, /rē/ ‘he saw’
	توامر (A)	/tawāmar/ ‘they conspired’
	ينشوان (A)	/yVnšawān/, /yVnšuʾān/ ‘they grow together’
	ماادب (B)	/maʾādib/ ‘banquets’
**aʾū*	بدوا (A)	/badaw/, /badū/ ‘they began’
	بدو (B)	/badū/, /baduw/ ‘they began’
	بداو (B)	/badaʾū/, /badaw/ ‘they began’
	تلجون (A)	/tVlǧawn/ ‘you seek refuge’
	امتلوا (A)	/Vmtalaw/ ‘they were filled’
	ابدؤا (D)	/Vbdū/, /Vbdaʾū/ ‘begin! (MPL)’
**āʾi*	قايل (ABCD)	/qāʾil/ ‘saying (MSG)’
	نايبه (A)	/nāʾiyah/, /nāyiyah/ ‘far off (MSG)’

Context	Spelling (Hand)	Reconstruction
	تراف (ABD)	/tarāʾaf/ ‘he felt compassion’
**āʾa*	تراف (A)	/tarāʾaf/ ‘he felt compassion’
	رداه (A)	/radāʾ(a)-h(ū)/ ‘his cloak’
	ترايا (AC)	/tarāyaʾ/, /tarāyā/, /tarēʾā/, /tarēʾā/ ‘he appeared to’
**āʾā*	يترايا (AC)	/yVtarāyaʾ/, /yVtarāyā/, /yVtarēyaʾ/, /yVtarēʾā/ ‘he appears to’
	مراياه (A)	/murāyaʾah/, /murāyāh/, /murēyaʾah/, /murēʾāh/ ‘appearance’
	ترآا (D)	/tarāʾā/ ‘he appeared to’
	بناوون (A)	/bannāʾūn/, /bannāwūn/ ‘builders (NOM)’
	مراوون (C)	/murāʾūn/, /murāwūn/ ‘hypocrites (NOM)’
	يرايوا (AC)	/yurāyiʾū/, /yurēyiʾū/, /yurēʾū/ ‘they act hypocritically’
**āʾū*	ترايون (AC)	/turāyiʾūn/, /turēyiʾūn/, /turēʾūn/ ‘you act hypocritically (MPL)’
	مرايون (A)	/murāyiʾūn/, /murēyiʾūn/, /murēʾūn/ ‘hypocrites (NOM)’
	تراؤا (D)	/tarāʾū/ ‘they acted hypocritically’
	مراي (A)	/murāyiʾ/, /murāy/, /murēʾi/ ‘hypocrite’
**āʾī*	مرايين (AC)	/murāyiʾīn/, /murēyiʾīn/, /murēʾīn/ ‘hypocrites (OBL)’
**aʾʾu*	تراس (B)	/taraʾʾus/ ‘presiding over’
**ay*	شى/شى (ABCD)	/šayʾ/, /šay/ ‘a thing’
	شيا (A)	/šayʾ/, /šayʾa/ ‘a thing’
	مراه (ABCD)	/marʾah/ ‘a woman’
**Cʾa*	مره (A)	/marah/ ‘a woman’
	طمانينه (A)	/ṭamʾanīnah/ ‘tranquility’
	بديا (ACD)	/badiyyan/, /badʾan/ ‘beginning’
**Cʾi#*	بدي (A)	/badʾi/, /badiʾ/, /badī/ ‘the beginning (GEN)’

Context	Spelling (Hand)	Reconstruction
**Cʔu#*	بدوا (A)	/badʔu/, /baduʔ/, /badū/ 'the beginning (NOM)'
	بدو (B)	/badʔu/, /baduʔ/, /baduw/ 'the beginning (NOM)'
CVʔ#	ابد (A)	/Vbd(a)/ 'begin! (MSG)'
	لم يجتر (A)	/lam yVğtar(i)/ 'no one dared'
	ابدا (D)	/Vbdaʔ/ 'begin! (MSG)'
Ca-ʔa[1]	فايذن (A)	/fa-ʔiḏan/ 'so then'
C-ʔa[30]	من اجلى (AB)	/min ʾVğlī/ 'for my sake'
	من اجل (AC)	/min ʾVğl/ 'for the sake of'
	من اين (A)	/min ʾayn/ 'from where?'
	منجل (BC)	/min͡Vğl/ 'for the sake of'
	منجلى (BC)	/min͡Vğlī/ 'for the sake of'
C-ʔū[30]	الاول/الاولي (ABCD)	/al-ʾūlā/ 'the first (FSG)'
	الولا (B)	/al͡ūlā/ 'the first (FSG)'

There are numerous patterns attested in these spellings, some of which suggest the scribes—either all, or, in some cases, a subset—aimed to indicate the presence of a glottal stop, while others clearly indicate its absence. I will discuss a few examples of each case, in turn.

In numerous places, the orthography seems to indicate, often intentionally, the presence of the glottal stop. This is most evident in places where there are two *ʾalif*s, which are most common across hands in **āʾa* and **aʾā* phonetic contexts.

(46) رداٰاه (Hand A)
/radāʾ(a)-h(u)/
'his cloak'

[1] Across morpheme boundaries.

(47) ترااف (Hands A, B, and D)
/tarāʾaf/
'show mercy! (MSG)'

(48) ماادب (Hand B)
/maʾādib/
'banquets'

Similarly, in at least one place, an *ʾalif* is spelled in place of what in Quranic orthography would be a glide, e.g., يكتاب /yVktaʾib/ 'he is dejected', instead of يكتيب, which strongly suggests the presence of the glottal stop. Both kinds of spellings are attested in other early Islamic corpora. We have already seen the use of consecutive *ʾalif*s in, e.g., the papyri and early Christian texts (Blau 1966–1967, 85; Hopkins 1984, 20), ابانا 'our fathers (ACC)', and متى شاات 'whenever she wishes', as well as some of our earliest Classical MSS, e.g., in Or 298 and Ar. 3315 (see examples in Ch. 2, §6.0, above), to spell **āʾV* and **āʾā* sequences. Spellings with an *ʾalif* instead of a glide to spell **uʾ* and **iʾ* as well as **VʾI* and **VʾU* are apparently rarer in these same corpora, although they occur in early Christian Arabic MSS, e.g., ليس نامر 'we were not ordered', instead of ليس نومر, and يامن 'he will believe' instead of يومن, alongside ياذي 'he will harm', instead of يوذي (examples from Blau 1966–1967, 85–86, §11.1.1). Regarding these, scholars have correctly recognised that such spellings reflect scribal intention to represent the glottal stop.[2] In fact, spellings of etymological glottal stop with *ʾalif*, in defiance of the Ḥiǧāzī orthographic

[2] For example, Blau (1966–1967, 85) suggests they are "an attempt to prevent by this spelling the vernacular pronunciation without the glottal stop." Hopkins (1984, 20) reports "the writing of double *alif* to mark

tradition, is attested in several early Quranic MSS, including DAM 01–29.1, which is a fragmentary codex from the Great Mosque of Ṣanʿāʾ (Cellard 2018; Van Putten 2018b, 111–14, §9; Sidky 2020, 157). In it, etymological glottal stop is written with *ʾalif* instead of the glides *yāʾ* and *wāw*: ويسالون instead of ʿUṯmānic Text ويسلون /wa-yasʾalūna/ 'and they ask', جاتكم instead of ʿUṯmānic Text جيتكم /ǧiʾtu-kum/ 'I came to you', افاده instead of ʿUṯmānic Text افده /ʾafʾidah/ 'hearts', and سياه instead of ʿUṯmānic Text سييه /sayyiʾah/ 'bad (FSG)' (see Van Putten and Sidky f.c. on these spellings in the context of companion Quranic recitation traditions).

More debatable are spellings of sequences with etymological glottal stop with two glides to spell **iʾū* and **iʾī* sequences where the Quran would attest only one. In Vat. Ar. 13, these spellings occur in several phonetic contexts. Most common are such double-glide spellings in **iʾū* and **iʾī* sequences.

(49) الخاطيون (Hand A)
ʾl-ḫʾṭywn /al-ḫāṭiʾūn/ or /al-ḫāṭiyūn/
'the sinners'

(50) الخاطيين (Hand A; cf. Quranic الخاطين Q12.29)
ʾl-ḫʾṭyyn /al-ḫāṭiʾīn/ or /al-ḫāṭiyīn/
'the sinners'

(51) ممتليون (Hand A)
mmtlywn /mumtaliʾūn/ or /mumtaliyūn/
'filled (MPL)'

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a glottal stop adjacent to a long *ā*," but argues it is "late, or confined to literary texts… suggesting the influence of CA [= Classical Arabic]."

(52) متكيون (Hand B; cf. Quranic متكين Q18.31)
mtkywn /muttakiʾūn/ or /muttakiyūn/
'reclining (MPL)'

(53) يستهزيون (Hand A; cf. Quranic يستهزون Q11.8)
ysthzywn /yVstahziʾūn/ or /yVstahziyūn/
'they mock'

As the parallel spellings included with the examples show, the ʿUṯmānic Text attests only a single glide, probably reflecting the loss of the glottal stop, with a resulting **iʾū* > *ū* and **iʾī* > *ī* (Van Putten 2018b; 2022, 120–22, §5.2). The spellings in Vat. Ar. 13 are common across early Islamic corpora, and become part of Classical orthography. The question is whether these sequences are better interpreted as glides indicative of a glottal stop, or rather a non-Ḥiǧāzī **iʾū* > *iyū* and **iʾī* > *iyī*.

Blau (1966–1967, 190, §91) contends that III-ʾ verbs have universally merged with III-*Y* ones, and thus interprets these spellings as reflecting underlying *iyū / iyī* (for examples, see 199–200, §101). In Vat. Ar. 13, there are pieces of evidence that support both *iʾV* and *iY/wV* sequences. Supporting the presence of an underlying glottal stop are spellings of III-ʾ roots with **VʾV* sequences that are spelled with *ʾalif*, rather than a glide, indicating the retention of the glottal stop in at least some of these roots, e.g., Hand A برات *brʾt* /burʾiat/ 'she was healed' (fols 25v; 55v), alongside Hand C هزات *hzʾt* /hazaʾat/ or /haziʾat/ 'they mocked'.

There is, however, also evidence for a III-ʾ and III-*Y* root merger in the MS as well. First, the single III-*Y* active participle attested in the Gospel portions of the MS is spelled with two glides as well, e.g. باكيون *bʾkywn*, presumably /bākiyūn/, 'those weeping' (fols 56r; 80v). Additionally, most other examples of

the 3FSG perfect of *III-ʾ roots are spelled without an *ʾalif*, the same spelling of *III-*Y* roots: نشت *nšt* /našat/ 'it grew tall' (fol. 21r), امتلت *ʾmtlt* /Vmtalat/ 'it filled up' (fol. 22r) and بدت *bdt* /badat/ 'she began' (fols 73r; 78r). These could, of course, merely reflect the loss of the glottal stop in **aʾa* sequences, which indeed appears to have been the case based on spellings like رف *rf* /raf/ or /rāf?/, from *RʾF* 'he was compassionate' (fol. 84v). However, spellings of apocopate and imperative forms of *III-ʾ roots, which lack either an *ʾalif*, e.g., ابد *ʾbd* /Vbd(a)/ (fols 32v; 81v) instead of **ابدا 'begin! (MSG)', or a glide, e.g., لم يجتر *lm yğtr* /lam yVğtar(i)/ 'he did not dare' (fol. 69r) instead of **لم يجتري, strongly support the assumption of a partial merger of *III-ʾ and III-*Y* roots. It would seem, then, that there is good reason to see the above spellings with two glides as indeed reflecting the shift of *III-ʾ roots to the III-*Y* category, and thus **iʾū* > *iyū* and **iʾī* > *iyī*.

Note, however, that the merger of paradigms is only partial since, e.g., the second person perfects of *III-ʾ roots are spelled with *ʾalif* and not *yāʾ*, e.g., قراتم *qrʾtm* 'you have read (MPL)', and not **قريتم. We might imagine that the glottal stop had been retained in **aʾC* sequences, although this is challenged by the only other relevant spelling, e.g., استنوا *ʾstnwʾ* (fol. 80v) /Vstannū/ from **Vstaʾnū* 'be patient! (MPL)', not **استانوا. Further, the parts of the paradigm in which there is overlap between *III-ʾ and III-*Y* roots involve short vowel sequences, either **aʾa* or **aʾ#*. Returning to the spellings of *III-ʾ imperfects and participles from above, there is another problem with the assumption of **iyūn* and **iyīn* realisations underlying the spellings. Even if, as seems quite possible,

*III-ʾ > III-*Y* merger had happened in this part of the paradigm, other evidence for *iyūn / iyīn* realisations of III-*Y* is lacking. After all, in the modern dialects, we find only *īn*, which is reflected likewise in the Quranic spellings as well (cf. also النبين for **al-nabiyyīn* < **al-nabīʾīn* 'the prophets' at Q2.61; Q3.21; Q4.69; etc.). Most have posited therefore that باكيون type spellings represent a hypo-correction (e.g., Khan 2007, 530). باكيون is a fine candidate for hypo-correction in Vat. Ar. 13; however, the question is whether the *III-ʾ spellings of the خاطيين type reflect the same kind of hypo-correction.

While this is possible, I suggest another possibility, namely that the spellings reflect the intentional targeting of a register or variety with glottal stop in those positions. The choice to reflect a glottal stop is, then, either to use an *ʾalif* or homorganic glide *yāʾ*. It appears that *ʾalif*, when used to represent the glottal stop was mainly an option when the vowel preceding was *a*-class; otherwise, a glide was preferred. If the merger of *III-ʾ and III-*Y* roots had occurred in the active participle paradigm, but the target variety maintained *III-ʾ as a distinct phonetic category, this could lead to a hypo-correct spelling of III-*Y* participles by analogy:

- Vernacular: *ḫāṭūn / ḫāṭīn* and *bākūn / bākīn*
- Target: *ḫāṭiʾūn / ḫāṭiʾīn* and *bākūn / bākīn*
- Spelling: خاطيون / خاطيين > > *باكيون / *باكيين

I see no reason to try to account for the spellings by positing a different realisation of **iʾū* and **iʾī* along with **iyū* and **iyī*, both of which had likely already become *ū* and *ī* in the Ḥiǧāz, and which are universally thus in the modern dialects. Instead, the question becomes how one writes the sequence *iʾū* and *iʾī* when

the writing tradition reflected only *ū* and *ī*. The hypo-correction of III-*Y* participles was likely merely orthographic. The target variety of Vat. Ar. 13 (especially Hands A and B) was, I contend, a register that retained glottal stop in this context, but that the merger of *III-ʾ and *III-*Y* roots in that paradigm possibly characterised the vernaculars (as it did the one behind the Quranic consonantal text!).

While the orthographic practice of writing two consecutive *ʾalif*s to indicate the glottal stop is virtually ubiquitous in **āʾa* sequences, it occurs only once in the sequence **aʾā*, and the spellings of other instances of **aʾā*, as well as of **aʾū*, are less clear but seem to indicate its absence, reflecting **aʾū* > *aw* and **aʾā* > *awā*.

1.1. **aʾū*

(54) تلجون (Hand A)
tlǧwn /tVlǧawn?/
'you will seek shelter'

(55) بدوا (Hand A)
bdwʾ /badaw?/
'they began'

(56) امتلوا (Hand A)
ʾmtlwʾ /Vmtalaw?/
'they were filled'

(57) بدو (Hand B)
bdw /badaw?/
'they began'

(58) ابدؤا (Hand D)
ʾbdūʾ /Vbdū?/
'begin! (MPL)'

1.2. **aʾā*

(59) توامر (Hand A)
twʾmr /tawāmar?/
'they conspired'

(60) ينشوان (Hand A)
ynšwʾn /yVnšawān?/
'they (DU) grow'

(61) ري (Hand B)
ry /rē?/
'he saw'

A few of these spellings should be qualified. First, while the 3PL perfect ending of **badaʾa* 'he began' is typically spelled وا or و, the latter in a single example by Hand B, another Hand B form, بداو, also may reflect an underlying glottal stop, i.e., /badaʾū/. The sequence او is attested in numerous places in the Quran, typically spelling **āʾu(n)* and **āʾū* sequences (Van Putten 2022, 248, §A.2.3.8). Here, it is ambiguous, either reflecting an etymological spelling, or perhaps a hybrid spelling, similar to what we find for the اى sequence in the Quran (Al-Jallad 2021; Van Putten 2022, 251–54, §A.2.7). Likewise, the spelling ينشوان is opaque, since it may theoretically represent either an *a*-theme vowel or *u*-theme vowel in the imperfect, i.e., **yanšaʾān* or *yanšuʾān*. If the latter, a glide spelling would not indicate the lack of glottal stop. Among the various attested forms, the strongest evidence for a glide instead of glottal stop realisation is the spelling توامر, where based on other spellings we would expect تاامر or تامر if something like /taʾāmar(a)/ were intended. Taken together, then, the evidence

suggests the absence of the glottal stop in these two phonetic contexts, but this is not certain.

Trickier still to interpret are sequences of long *ā* + glottal stop + another long vowel (**āʾā* / **āʾī* / **āʾū*), not only in Vat. Ar. 13, but also in other early MSS. Regarding **āʾū*, two relevant words, **bannāʾūn*, spelled بناوون *bnʾwwn* 'builders' (Hand A, fol. 36r) and **murāʾūn*, spelled مراوون 'hypocrites' (Hand C, fol. 5v). Based on Quranic orthography, we would expect underlying *bannāʾūn* to be spelled with only one glide, i.e., بناون, and the use of two *wāw*s might have originated in an attempt to a realisation without a glottal stop, i.e., *bannāwūn* (as apparently posited by Hopkins 1984, 25, §21e, based on a few examples in the early papyri). However, it eventually becomes the standard spelling, and can hardly be read as precluding realisation of a glottal stop. Whether the spelling here represents underlying *āwūn* or *āʾūn* depends on the presence or absence of evidence for the realisation of a glottal stop in **āʾV* sequences elsewhere in the MS. The use of double-*ʾalif* spellings might be considered evidence for the realisation of a glottal stop in this phonetic context as well. Also of relevance is the fact that *-*āʾV* sequences when *V* = a case vowel and followed by a pronominal suffix are written with a homorganic glide, for example اربابيها 'their (dogs') masters (GEN)' (fol. 25v) and اباوكم 'your ancestors (NOM)' (fol. 80v). These spellings are attested in the Quran as well, in the one phonetic context in which the glottal stop was typically retained (2022, 121, §5.2). However, spellings with and without a glide alternate in early Quranic MSS, e.g., construct جزاو and جزا both 'reward (NOM)', and Van Putten (2022, 286–87, §A.4.11) speculates that the forms

with the glides reflect the absence of the glottal stop, whereas the use of just *ʾalif* reflected its retention, i.e., جزاو /ǧazāwu/ but جزا /ǧazāʾu/. If so, their usage in Vat. Ar. 13 does not necessarily affirm the presence of the glottal stop; since these spellings become the basis for subsequent Classical orthography, in the 9th/10th century CE they could reflect either realisation (i.e., /āwu/ and /āyi/ or /āʾu/ and /āʾi/).

Evidence for **āʾī* and **āʾā* is mostly confined to the spellings of form III and form VI derived forms from the root **RʾY*. In Vat. Ar. 13, forms III and VI are spelled with combinations of glides or glides + *ʾalif* in Hands A, B, and C as follows (see Table 7).

Table 7: Spellings of form III and form VI of **RʾY*, Hands A, B, and C

	Form III	**Form VI**
Perfect	—	ترايا
Imperfect	ترايون ليرايوا	يترايا
Participle	المراي مرايون / مراوون مراييين	—
Maṣdar	مراياه	—

Blau (1966–1967, 94–95, §11.4.1.1) reports these spellings in other early Christian MSS, and Hopkins (1984, 27, §24a) likewise reports this for the early papyri, though he cites only one instance (ترايا). Blau assumes a straightforward development from underlying form III **yurāʾī* > *yurāyī* and form VI **tarāʾā* > *tarāyā*, with the loss of underlying glottal, i.e., **āʾī* and **āʾū* > *āyī* and *āyū*. While **āʾī* > *āyī* is unproblematic, **āʾū* > *āyū* instead of *āwū* is.

We would expect 3MPL **yurāʾūni*, resulting in **yurāwūn* if the glottal stop had been lost, and participial **murāʾūn* > *murāwūn*. And indeed, this is what the lexicographers mention (Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān Al-ʿArab*, 1540I): يُراوُون *yurāwūn* 'they see each other'. The same can be said for the MPL form III participle, i.e., *murāwūn*, which is at odds with the spelling مرايون in this and other Christian MSS, though the expected مراوون is encountered once in Vat. Ar. 13, alongside 14 instances of مرايون. So, for Blau the base form *āyī* from the 3MSG imperfect spread throughout each paradigm. But this levelling is not motivated if we are dealing with a straightforward loss of glottal stop from underlying **āʾū* and **āʾī*. Neither is the shift of form VI perfect **tarāʾā* > **tarāyā* particularly clear, since the most natural outcome of **āʾā* is simply *ā*. Deriving the attested spellings from an underlying **rāʾā* and *tarāʾā* via the loss of the glottal stop is therefore not convincing.

Alternatively, it is possible that the spellings in Christian Arabic MSS reflect a historical metathesis of Perfect **rāʾaya* > **rāyaʾa* / Imperfect **yurāʾiyu* > *yurāyiʾu*, and Perfect **tarāʾaya* > *tarāyaʾa* / Imperfect **yatarāʾayu* > **yatarāyaʾu*. While this might at first seem unprecedented, it is in fact compatible with the behaviour of form I **raʾaya* in the Quranic consonantal text, which is را in the 3MSG perfect, as well as with Ḥiǧāzī forms that the grammarians and lexicographers adduce, especially /rāʾa/ (and, for **naʾaya*, /nāʾa/; see Al-Farrāʾ, *Luġāt Al-Qurʾān*, 80–81; Van Putten 2022, 292–93, §§5.11; A.4.17). Van Putten argues against a metathesis because of the behaviour of the 2SG alternation between ريت and رايت spellings, which he interprets as underlying /rāyt/, and thus suggests 3SG **raʾaya* > **rāya* > **rāʾ*. However, it is also

possible that the metathesis took place in only the third person, i.e., **raʾaya* > **rayaʾa*, with subsequent resolution of the triphthongs **rayaʾa* > **rāʾa* (> *rāʾ*), but **raʾaytu* > **rāytu* (> *rāyt*).

If the metathesis hypothesis correctly accounts for the form I forms reported by the grammarians and reflected in the Quranic spellings, and perhaps reflected in the minority spelling ري in Hand B (and other Christian MSS; see Ch. 2, §7.0), it can also more completely account for the spellings and behaviour attested in the early Christian spellings, including in Vat. Ar. 13. The form III spelling ترايون would make sense as reflecting historical **turāyiʾūn*. If the glottal stop was not intended to be realised, then the same spelling might reflect *turāyūn* < **turāyiʾūn*, whereas, again, the traditional development of **turāʾūn* > *turāyūn* is unexpected. The form III *maṣdar* مراياه would have originally been **murāyaʾah* (> *murāyāh*, assuming loss of glottal stop). Likewise, according to this proposal, the form VI perfect ترايا reflects **tarāyaʾa*, with possible loss of the glottal stop resulting in *tarāyā*. The form VI imperfect يترايا originally reflected **yatarāyaʾu* > *yatarāyaʾ*, and, if reflecting the loss of glottal stop, still conceivably represents *yatarāyā*. Whether or not a glottal stop was intended to be read in Vat. Ar. 13 is unclear; however, the present proposal can, I argue, account for the spellings more successfully than the proposal made by Blau et al.[3]

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[3] Lane (1863, I: 999) assumes something similar when he cites forms such as, e.g., رايَاهُم and مُرَايَاةٌ which he attributes to "transposition," and suggests the MS from which the forms were drawn might originally have reflected رايَأَهُم and مُرَايَأَةٌ.

We have seen significant evidence that the glottal stop in **aʾa* sequences was lost in most cases, but that is not true in all cases, especially in the spelling of the word امراه *ʾmrʾh* 'a woman'. Such a spelling might, however, reflect a *plene* spelling of long *ā*, i.e., *imrāh*. This was likely the realisation in the language of the Quranic consonantal text, although the ʿUṯmānic Text attests defective spellings of this word, e.g., امرب /imrāt/ (Q3.35; Van Putten 2018b, 108). In any case, Vat. Ar. Ms 13 attests evidence that **iʾa* and **aʾi* sequences retained the glottal stop, such as the perfect passive from **BRʾ* spelled برات 'she was healed' instead of **بريت. For **aʾi*, in addition to the spelling mentioned above of *yVktaʾib* as يكتاب 'he is dejected' instead of **يكتيب, note also the spelling of *naṭmaʾinna* as نطماين 'we feel peace' (fol. 84r) rather than **نطمين. Blau (1966–1967, 98) considers نطماين spellings a kind of blended spelling. While possible, it is the same spelling one finds in the Quran for **la-ʾin* لاين and **fa-ʾin* فاين. There was therefore a spelling convention for representing a sequence that, if targeting a variety in which the glottal stop was retained in those contexts, was easily transferable to other such contexts.

Post-consonantal glottal stop appears to have been regularly realised when not across morpheme boundaries, as in, e.g., طمانينه *ṭmʾnynh* 'peace, tranquillity', presumably /ṭamʾanīnah/, as well as the nearly ubiquitous spelling مراه *mrʾh* 'a woman', presumably /mraʾah/. However, مراه alternates in two places (fols 25v and 55v) with the spelling مره *mrh*, presumably /marah/. There are two main exceptions to this pattern. First, as discussed in Ch. 2, §3.0, forms of the root **SʾL* are overwhelmingly written with Quranic spellings

that lack the *ʾalif*, e.g., مسله *mslh* **masʾalah* ‘matter, question’. Second, cases of what is presumably **bVdʾ* ‘beginning’, are spelled with a final glide instead of *ʾalif*, which might indicate a loss of glottal stop: Hands A and C بديا ‘beginning (ACC)’, which may variously reflect /badyan/ or /badiyyan/, but presumably not /badʾan/, for which we would expect بدا. A vocalised form produced by Hand D is written بديًا *bdyan* ‘beginning (ACC)’, which is still vague, as it could reflect a retention of the spelling original to the MS, but pointed to represent /badʾan/, or it could reflect /badiyyan/. Another form occurs in a Hand A section written من البدي *mn ʾl-bdy* ‘from the beginning’, which could reflect /min al-badī/, a glottal stop realisation such as /min al-badʾi/ or, with metathesis, /min al-badiʾ/. Finally, both Hands A and B produce forms in the nominative written with the glide *wāw*: Hand A البدوا *ʾl-bdwʾ* ‘the beginning (NOM)’ (fol. 63v) and Hand B بدو الخليقه *bdw ʾl-ẖlyqh* ‘the beginning of creation’ (fol. 70r). In Quranic orthography, spellings ending in و largely occur on words ending in consonantal /w/, whereas وا occurs with words ending in /ū/ or /aw/ (Van Putten 2022, 249, §A.2.3). However, given the variability in spellings of final *-ū* / *-aw* in the MS (on which, see Ch. 2, §8.0 above), it is impossible to determine for sure whether these spellings reflect forms with a glottal stop, such as /uʾ/ or /ʾu/, or rather something closer to /uw(w)/ or /ū/.

Similar variation is attested in spellings of post-consonantal glottal stops. In the context of morpheme boundaries (in Arabic *naql* ‘transportation’), the realisation of the glottal stop varies by scribal hand. Hand A consistently writes *ʾalif* in such contexts, suggesting the realisation of the glottal stop, e.g., من اجلي *mn ʾǧl-y* ‘for my sake’, presumably /min ʾağlī/, and من اين *mn ʾyn* ‘from

where?', presumably /min ʾayn(a)/. Hand B attests both, but tends to write these sequences without *ʾalif*, suggesting the elision of the glottal stop in this context: من اجل *mn ʾǧl* 'for the sake of' (fol. 69v), but also منجلي *mnǧl-y* 'for my sake' (fol. 69v), presumably /minaǧlī/, and الولا *ʾlwlʾ* 'the first (FSG)' (fol. 72r), presumably /alūlā/.[4] Finally, Hand C attests only spellings that omit *ʾalif*, e.g., منجل *mnǧl* 'for the sake of' (fol. 4v), presumably also /minaǧlī/. Such spellings without *ʾalif* are well attested in early corpora, both Christian (Blau 1966–1967, 101–2, §11.6.1.1) and the papyri (Hopkins 1984, 30–33, §27). Such spellings are often categorised in simplistic binary fashion as in opposition to Classical Arabic, but it should be noted that the Quranic recitation tradition of Warš ʿan Nāfiʿ regularly exhibits the elision of *hamzah* in this position, e.g., **man ʾaslama* > *man‿aslama* 'the one who submitted'. In this practice the definite article counts as a part of the word, e.g., *al-ʾarḍ* > *al‿arḍ* 'the earth'.

Due to the ubiquity of these assumptions among Middle Arabists, it is worth lingering on a methodological point here. Contemporaneous with the writing of much of the corpora of early papyri, inscriptions, and the Christian Arabic corpus—treated in Blau (1966–1967) and including also the earliest scribal hands (Hands A, B, and C) in Vat. Ar. 13—we have evidence of Quranic

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[4] Both ʾAbū ʿAmr and Nāfiʿ attest this in, e.g., عادا الاولى 'the first ʿĀd' (Q53.50). ʾAbū ʿAmr reads it /ʿādallūlā/, with assimilation of *tanwīn* to the subsequent definite article and elision of the glottal stop following the article. Nāfiʿ's transmitters attest two subtly distinct realisations: Qālūn has /ādallu'lā/ and Warš has /ādallūlää/.

recitation practices, whether in vocalised MSS or the transmissions of (subsequently canonical) *qirāʾāt* that witness to the same practices, which, in the early written corpora, are considered evidence of deviations from Classical Arabic. In addition to the elision of the glottal stop in *naql* contexts, Blau (1966–1967, 102–4) and Hopkins (1984, 30–33) both highlight the word-initial elision of glottal stop when preceded by prefixes, indicated by the lack of *ʾalif* spellings, e.g., بخووته 'by his brotherhood' < **bi-ʾuḫuwwati-hū* and ليام 'for days' < *li-ʾayyām* and ويضا 'and also' < **wa-ʾayḍan* alongside فنقاذه 'and its indemnification' <*fa-ʾinqāḏu-hū*. Both further highlight spellings of the vocative *yā* + glottal stop-initial words where the initial *ʾalif* is unwritten, e.g., ياسرايل 'Oh, Israel!' < *yā ʾisrāʾīl* and يابي 'Oh, my father!' < *yā ʾabī*. Again, these are treated as deviations from a Classical standard, presumably due to vernacular influence. But, in addition to being the regular Quranic spellings, the optional dropping of the *hamzah* in this position is typical of Ḥamzah and Hišām ʿan Ibn ʿĀmir when the word is in pause: *li-ʾanna* > *liyanna# / li-ʾanna#*, alongside, e.g., **faʾti* > *fāt# / faʾt#* (Van Putten 2026, §1.6.2.5). Spellings without *ʾalif* following the vocative particle are typical of the Quran, and reflected in the same reading traditions, e.g., *yā(ā).iblīs# / yā(ā) ʾiblīs* 'Oh, Satan!' (Van Putten 2026).

The realisation of the glottal stop intended by the scribes that produced Vat. Ar. 13 reflects both intra- and inter-hand variability. As we have seen, much of the variability has at least loose parallels in other corpora that are considered Classical by definition. That is not to say that the scribes intended to reflect a

particular Quranic reading tradition. It does, however, contextualise the variation and demonstrate that the conservative/archaic manifestation of the glottal stop typical of subsequent norms was not the only one acceptable in earlier periods. The Quran itself, as well as subsequent reading traditions, all reflect similar kinds of variation. Based on the spellings detailed above, we can surmise the realisation of the glottal stop, or the lack thereof, in the following phonetic contexts (note that a question mark indicates evidence that is suggestive, but not decisive).

Table 8: Summary of evidence for glottal stop by phonetic context across scribal hands

Context		Hand A	Hand B	Hand C	Hand D
*#ʾv	*#ʾi	> ʾi (?)	> ʾi (?)	—	
	*#ʾu	> ʾu (?)	> ʾu (?)	—	> ʾu
*#ʾV (< *ʾvʾ)	*#ʾī (< *ʾiʾ)	> ʾī	> ʾī		
*vʾv	*iʾa	> iʾa > iya	—		> iʾa
	*aʾi	> aʾi (?)	> aʾi	—	> aʾi
	*aʾu	> aʾu (?)	> ā		
	*aʾa	> ā	> ā	> aʾa	> aʾa
*vʾV	*iʾī		> iʾī		
	*iʾū	> iʾū (?)	> iʾū (?)	—	> iʾū (?) > ū (?)
	*iʾā	> iʾā (?) > iyā (?)			
	*uʾū	> uʾū (?) > uwū (?) > ū (?)		> uʾū (?) > ū (?)	
	*aʾū	> aw	> aw (?) > aʾū (?)		> ū (?)
	*aʾā	> aY/Wā (?) > aʾā (?)	> ā (?) > aʾā		

Context		Hand A	Hand B	Hand C	Hand D
*V'v	*ā'i	> ā'i	> ā'i	> ā'i	> ā'i
	*ā'a	> ā'a	> ā'a	—	> ā'a
*V'V	*ā'ī	> ā'ī (?)		> ā'ī (?)	
	*ā'ū	> ā'ū (?)		> ā'ū (?)	> ā'ū
	*ā'ā	> ā'ā (?)	—	> ā'ā (?)	> ā'ā
*V'v#	*ā'V	> ā (?)	> ā (?)	> ā (?)	> ā'(V)
*v''v	*a''u	—	> a''u (?)	—	
*vy/w'	*ay'	> ay (?) > ay' (?)	> ay (?) > ay' (?)	> ay (?) > ay' (?)	> ay'
*C'v	*C'i	> C'i (?) > Ci' (?) > Cī (?)		—	
	*C'u	> C'u (?) > Cu' (?) > Cū (?)	> C'u (?) > Cu' (?) > Cū (?)	—	
	*C'a	> C'a	> C'a	> C'a	> C'a
*Cv'#	*Ci'	> C(V)	> C(V)	—	
	*Ca'	> C(V)	> C(V)	—	
C#_'v	*C#_'a	> C_'a	> C‿a > C_'a (?)	> C‿a	—

2.0. Realisations of *ā, *-ay/wV and *-ā'

The long vowel *ā* surfaces as a realisation in various corpora of Arabic as the reflex of what in Proto-Arabic were originally distinct phonetic sequences. These include especially: **ā*, **ay/wV*, and **ā'V*. In Vat. Ar. 13, spellings of each of these sequences are potentially revelatory of their phonetic realisation, and we will discuss each in turn.

As we have already seen in Ch. 2 (§§2.0; 4.1), instances of long *ā* are most commonly spelled *plene*, though in a few words are spelled defectively. An exception is the final **ā* in the adverb

of manner *hākaḏā* ‘thus, in this way’, which is spelled in portions produced by Hand C as هاكذى / هاكذي in addition to the more typical هاكذا and هكذا. This spelling is attested in various corpora, including the early Christian (Blau 1966–1967, 83, §10.2.2), papyri (Hopkins 1984, 15, §12e, though here mostly without *hā*, i.e., كذى / كذي), and indeed Classical (Wright I, 266, §340a). While it is likely that a form like **kaḏī* is reminiscent of modern dialectal forms like dialectal *čiḏi* ‘so, like this’ (Watson 2006, 23, §2.1), it was clearly a legitimate orthographic by-form of *(hā)kaḏā* and does not clearly indicate a realisation other than *ā* here.

As we saw in Ch. 2 (§§4.0; 6.0), word-final **awV* is usually spelled with *ʾalif* whether on nouns or verbs across scribal hands. Proto-Arabic **ay*, as well as **ayV* and **āyV* sequences, however, attest interesting distributions in portions produced by Hands A and B. First, III-*Y* nominal roots pattern with particles that end in **ay* in overwhelmingly being spelled with final ي / ى, whereas verbal III-*Y* forms are mostly spelled with ا. This suggests that, as in modern Mesopotamian *Qəltu* dialects, nouns and adjectives from III-*Y* roots were realised with /ē/ or /ī/, but III-*Y* verbs were realised with /ā/: *bušrē* ‘good news’ and *ṭūbē* ‘blessed’, but *bana* ‘he built’. Second, it was noted that word-final *ā* < **ayV* and word-final **āʾV* sequences were spelled with ي / ى when preceded by a *rāʾ*.

2.1. **ayV*

(62) الاخري (Hands A, B, and D)
ʾl-ʾḫry /al-ʾuḫrē/
‘the other (FSG)’

(63) بشري (Hands A and B)
bšry /bušrē/
'Gospel, good news'

(64) العدرى (Hand C)
ʾl-ʿdry /al-ʿaḏrē/ or /al-ʿadrē/
'the virgin'

(65) قري (Hands A, B, and D)
qry /qurē/
'villages'

(66) السكاري (Hands A and B)
ʾl-skʾry /al-sakārē/
'the drunkards'

2.2. **āʾV*

(67) الافتري (Hand A)
ʾftry /al-Vftirēʾ/
'blasphemy'

In Hand B, this appears to affect **aʾV* in the realisation of a historically III-ʾ imperfect, the imperfect **yVqraʾ*:

(68) يقري
yqry /yVqrē?/
'he reads'[5]

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[5] This is incidentally further evidence for the retention of the glottal stop in **aʾC* sequences, since we find قراتم in this context ubiquitously in Vat. Ar. 13, never **قريتم or **قرايتم. Interestingly, the latter spelling occurs once in the papyri, cited in Hopkins (1984, 28, n. 8). It could reflect a hybrid spelling, combining historical glottal stop with pronunciation

Indeed, *r*-adjacency is the context which is most determinative of ي / ى spellings instead of ا, to the point that even when compared only with other spellings of III-*Y* nominal forms, the difference is statistically significant (p = .0085 via Fisher's exact test). I suggest the most natural interpretation of this distribution is that *rāʾ* triggered a fronting (*ʾimālah*) of **ā* and **āʾ* > *ē* and *ēʾ*, respectively. While this might at first glance seem strange, as noted in Ch. 2.0, §6.2, this is in fact characteristic of a number of Quranic *qirāʾāt* traditions, though the specifics differ. The distribution here appears to be most similar to what is attested in ʾAbū ʿAmr's *qirāʾah* with a generalised *ʾimālah*, though here it applies to **-āʾV* sequences as well.[6]

For the most part, these spellings and evidence for *r*-adjacent *ʾimālah* of *ā* are limited to word-final sequences due to the fact that virtually all eligible roots are *r*-final or otherwise *r*-medial with root-final *Y*, i.e., *bšr*, *qry*, *fry*, etc. The main exception is the root **RʾY*. In form I, most hands spell the perfect as راي. However, we have already noted that in Hand B, the form I perfect is spelled both راي and ري. Neither of these is the typical Quranic spelling, which is instead را, possibly reflecting /rāʾ/, although راي, likely reflecting /raʾē/, occurs twice (Q53.11, 18) (Van Putten 2022, 292, §A.4.17). The spelling ري reflect a fronted

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yāʾ, i.e., /qarēt/, or it could be an example of the digraph spelling historical glottal stop, i.e., /qaraʾt/ (Al-Jallad 2021; Van Putten 2022, 251–54, §A.2.7).

[6] Such generalised *r*-adjacent *ʾimālah* is attested in vocalised Quranic MSS that do not follow any known reading tradition, e.g., in Arabe 325f.

realisation of Quranic /rāʾ/, i.e., /rēʾ/. Alternatively, it might reflect a development from something like Ḥamzah's and Al-Sūsī ʿan ʾAbī ʿAmr's realisation of Quranic راي, i.e., *reʾē* > *rē*. If so, along with the spelling of **yVqraʾu* as يقري, and **Vftirāʾ* as افتري, we can conclude that the *r*-adjacent *ʾimālah* is separate from the phonemic *ʾimālah* that distinguishes nominal and verbal forms attested in Vat. Ar. 13.

Finally, it is worth explicitly considering why final **āʾV* in **Vftirāʾ* is written here defectively, that is, only with an ي instead of اي. Word-final اي is attested in the manuscript when writing the plural demonstrative pronoun, e.g., هولاي, as well as when a word ending in **āʾ* has the 1SG suffix attached, e.g., اهراي *ʾhrʾ-y* 'my granary'. Otherwise, as we have already seen, word-final **āʾV* sequences are spelled simply with ا. This three-way distinction may reflect the absence of the glottal stop in that context word-finally, but retained when non-word final, especially if we allow for either هولاي to be an orthographic by-form (which, as we will see in Ch. 4.0, §2.0, it is within and across MSS), although it is possible that a pronunciation with the glottal stop was a matter of register mixing. The use of the combination اي would in this scenario be associated explicitly with writing the glottal stop: افتري /Vftirē/ but اهراي /ʾahrēʾī/. The sequence اي occurs frequently in early Quranic MSS, where it likely reflected a hybrid spelling, combining etymological glottal stop + the *yāʾ* that characterised the pronunciation after the lack of the glottal stop: جاى /ǧīy/ 'it was brought', مايه /miyah/ 'one hundred', شايت /šīt/ 'you (MSG) want', شاى /šayy/ 'a thing', as well as across morpheme boundaries when a word contains a *yāʾ* subsequently, e.g., باييم

/biy-yayyām/ ‘in the days of…’ (Diem 1980, §§127–28; Al-Jallad 2021; Van Putten 2022, 251–54, §A.2.7). It seems sensible, though, that a scribe could deduce that the same digraph was associated with the glottal stop based on this distribution. This would have implications for the form III and form VI spellings of **RʾY*, discussed above. If اي is indeed associated with the glottal stop, the above ترايا and يرايون might instead reflect something like /tarēʾā/ and /yurēʾūn/ (with *ʾimālah*), respectively.

3.0. Other Phonetic Processes

Evidence for other phonetic processes is limited to one-off spellings. One example is the assimilation of the person marker *tV* on the form V verb **tVt(V)zawwağ* ‘you (MSG) marry’, which in one place (fol. 83v) is spelled تزوج *tzwğ*, suggesting **tVt(V)zawwağ* > *tVzzawwağ*. Another example is the consistent spelling of the passive of the 3FSG form V from **WFY*, **tuwuffiyat* ‘she died’ as توفيت *twfyt*, rather than **توفت *twft*, the latter of which would presumably reflect dialectal *tawaffat*.

CHAPTER 4. MORPHOLOGY

Morphological variation is well known from the early Christian and papyrological corpora, and recent studies have further emphasised both the diversity of forms in the pre- and early Islamic corpora of Arabic, as well as their potential impact on our understanding of the linguistic geography of early Islamic Arabic (Al-Jallad 2015; 2018a; 2020a; Van Putten 2022, §5). While Vat. Ar. 13 attests mostly well-known forms, their usage is often varied throughout the manuscript, both within and across scribal hands. In keeping with the theme of this study, the variation is further witness to a dynamic process of selection, with scribes choosing forms and features based on grammatical sensibilities that differ from scribe to scribe.

1.0. Personal Pronouns

The morphological forms of the pronouns, both independent and pronominal suffixed, are for the most part exactly as one would expect based on other early Islamic-era Arabic texts, including the Quran and the *ʿArabiyyah*, as well as other contemporaneous Christian Arabic MSS. The attested independent forms are listed in Table 9 (overleaf). Noteworthy here is 3FSG form هيه, which occurs in pause.

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Table 9: Attested independent pronouns

	SG	PL	DU
3M	هو / هُوَ	هم	هما
3F	هي, هيه (35v)	هُنَّ	
2M	انت	انتم	انتما
2F	انت	—	
1C	انا	نحن	N/A

(69) اجابوا وقالوا لا علم لنا من اين هيه (35v)
ʾǧʾbwʾ w-qʾlwʾ lʾ ʿlm l-nʾ mn ʾyn hyh
'They answered and said, "We do not know where it is from"'

Such a pausal form has a direct parallel in the Quran, at Q101.10, which reads

(70) وَمآ أَدْرىٰكَ مَا هِيَه
wa-mā ʾadrā-ka mā hiyah
'And what will make you realise what that is?'

It seems that the Quranic spelling does indeed reflect original *hi-yah*, given the rhyme, and this seems to be most likely for Vat. Ar. 13 as well.[1] Luckily, Hand D provides a vocalised form of the 3FPL suffix, which (unsurprisingly, given the preferences of this scribe) is the classical form هُنَّ *hunna*.

The complete paradigm of suffixed pronouns is attested, the morphology of which is unremarkable. The paradigm follows.

[1] Pronouns that ended in *-h* (< **t*) were possibly much more common at one point, since the retention of the final short *a* on 3MSG and 3FSG forms in many modern dialects is plausibly due to protection from this *-h*, before it was elided in speech (Al-Jallad 2014).

Table 10: Attested object pronominal suffixes

	SG	PL	DU
3M	-ه	-هم	-هما
3F	-ها	-هن	
2M	-ك	-كم	-كما
2F	-ك	-كن	
1C	-ي, -ني	-نا	N/A

2.0. Deixis

The demonstrative pronoun series attested in Vat. Ar. 13 is, with one exception, identical with what the early grammarians refer to as the Ḥiǧāzī variants, which are ubiquitous in the Quran. These are characterised in the proximal set by the obligatory addition of a prefixed *hā*. Obligatory *hā* prefixes on the proximal demonstrative pronouns is apparently a Ḥiǧāzī innovation. Demonstrative pronouns with a prefixed *hā* are unknown in the pre-Islamic epigraphic record from the Levant. In Safaitic, for example, attests MSG *ḏ* /ḏā/ and FSG *t* /tī/ (Al-Jallad 2015, 80),[2] and CPL *ʾly* /ʾulay/ or /ʾulāy/ (Stokes 2020a), while the Namārah inscription attests FSG תי /tī/ (Fiema et al. 2015, 414). According to the grammarians, while *hā* demonstrative pronouns are known

[2] Note that Al-Jallad (2015, 80) adduces evidence for a FDU demonstrative from a single Safaitic inscription that apparently includes a prefixed *hā*: *l zhd bn mʿl bn fḍg h-bkrtn {h}ḏ* 'by Zhd son of Mʿl son of Fḍg are these two she-camels'. If this is indeed a demonstrative, he conjectures that it represents underlying /hāḏay/ or /hāḏā/. However, he reports that the *h* glyph on the rock is badly damaged, and, if so, the final word may not constitute a demonstrative at all.

in the Naǧd, there they alternate with forms without it, i.e., MSG *ḏā* and FSG *ḏī*, whereas in the Ḥiǧāz the *hā* is obligatory (Al-Farrāʾ, *Luġāt al-Qurʾān*, 22; Van Putten 2022, 104).

The main source of variation across Vat. Ar. 13 is orthographic. In singular and dual forms, the orthographic variants involve plene versus defective spellings of the prefix *hā*, as well as the application, or lack thereof, of consonantal dotting. The MPL proximal demonstrative attests the greatest orthographic variation, including *plene* versus defective spellings of the *hā*, as well as three different ways of spelling the final sequence. Each of the major variants is listed in Table 11.

Table 11: Proximal demonstrative pronouns by scribal hand

Hand	MSG	FSG	MDU	FDU	MPL
A	هاذا (17r) هذا	هده, هذه	هاذان (44v) هاذين (39v) هادىن (35v)	هاتين (38r)	هاولي (15v) هاولى (29v) هولاى (31r) هولاي (14r) هاولا (46r) هولا (46r)
B	هذا		—	—	هاولي (72v)
C			—	—	—
D			هذان (52v) هذين (50v)	هتين (12r)	هولاي (14r) هولآءِ (50r) هولآءٍ (52v)

For the MSG and FSG forms, I have not given folio numbers for those forms which are ubiquitous, or nearly so, opting instead to

provide them only for forms that occur only marginally, or, in the case of the MPL forms, when a sufficient number of orthographic by-forms exist in order to facilitate easy access to these spellings.

The spelling variation in the case of the MPL proximal demonstrative is typical, not only of early Christian Arabic MSS, but other corpora as well (Blau 1966–1967, 132–35, also ns 23 and 27). Some scribes attest a preferred variant, while others use multiple ones. Examples of the former include.

(71) لم يكن شى من هاولا قبل الدى ولد منه (Sinai Arabic MS 154, 101v)
lm ykn šy mn hʾwlʾ qbl ʾldy wld mn-h
'There was nothing before what came from him'

(72) وكل من يحل شي من هاولى الوصايا الصغار وعلم الناس هذا
(Sinai Arabic MS 72, 6v)
w-kl mn yḥl šy mn hʾwly ʾl-wṣʾyʾ ʾl-ṣġʾr w-ʿlm ʾl-nʾs hḏʾ
'And everyone who abrogates anything from these minor commandments and teaches people likewise'

Examples of intra-scribal variation include.

(73) من حل واحده من هولاي الوصايا الصغار (Sinai Arabic MS 74, 7v)
mn ḥl wʾḥdh mn hwlʾy ʾl-wṣʾyʾ ʾl-ṣġʾr
'Whoever abrogates one of these minor commandments'

(74) من مصابغ اقساط وكوس واخرات كثيره اشباه هاولاي تصنعوا
(Sinai Arabic MS 74, 82v)
mn mṣʾbġ ʾqsʾṭ w-kws w-ʾẖrʾt kṯyrh ʾšbʾh hʾwlʾy tṣnʿwʾ
'You practice washing cups and pitchers and many other things like these'

The orthographic variation seems to have been paralleled by a great deal of dialectal variation in its realisation as well, and this

was already the case in the pre- and early Islamic period. The grammarians document some of this variation. Al-Farrāʾ (*Luġāt al-Qurʾān*, 22) reports that the Qurayš and those around them (*wa-man ǧāwara-hum*) realised it as *hāʾulāʾi*, whereas some prominent tribes of the Naǧd had either *ʾulē* or *hāʾulē*, and still others from 'among the Arabs' (*baʿḍ min al-ʿarab*) drop the first *ʾalif*, thus attesting *hawlāʾi*. The Quranic consonantal text attests هولا, though based on comments by Al-Farrāʾ, Van Putten (2022, 104) argues that the Quranic evidence is most compatible with *hāʾulāʾi*.

The spellings attested in Vat. Ar. 13, even in the same hand, such as Hand A, may either be purely orthographic variation for the same underlying form, or instead represent multiple morphological forms. The most explicit spellings are of course in Hand D, two of which are clearly Classical *hāʾulāʾi*, and the third of which is compatible with that realisation. The spellings هولاي and هولاى are compatible with *hāʾulāʾi*, or a form without the *hamzah*, e.g., *hāʾulāy*, whereas the spellings and هاولي / هاولى might reflect such forms, but could also reflect a Naǧdī-like *hāʾulā / hāʾulē*.[3] The Quranic spelling هولا, and the *plene* by-form هاولا suggest either *hāʾulāʾi* or *hāʾulā*, but could also be spelling conventions that

[3] Van Putten (2022, 104) helpfully notes that Al-Farrāʾ explicitly writes *ʾalif maqṣūrah* with a *yāʾ*, not an *ʾalif*, and likely intended an *ʾimālah* pronunciation, which is how his Quranic *qirāʾāt* teacher, Al-Kisāʾī, recited *ʾalif maqṣūrah*s. The spelling هولا, the Quranic spelling, is not compatible with this, but could represent a Ḥiǧāzī spelling convention while the others are more reflective of contemporary pronunciation.

mask the pronunciation. Because of the commonality of orthographic variation within one and the same MS, and here even by the same scribal hand, it is impossible to know whether we are dealing with morphological diversity or, perhaps more likely, simple orthographic variation.

The distal demonstrative pronoun series in Vat. Ar. 13 is, with one exception, likewise identical to the set that the early grammarians attribute to Ḥiǧāzī dialects and the Quran, which are characterised by an infixed *li-* in the SG forms (Al-Farrāʾ, *Luġāt al-Qurʾān*, 11). Again, the pre-Islamic Arabic dialects of the Levant lack the *li* infix, as suggested by Safaitic FSG *tk* /tīka?/ (Al-Jallad 2015, 84), as did the Naǧdī dialects of the peninsula, according to the grammarians (Al-Farrāʾ, *Luġāt al-Qurʾān*, 11), and so these forms represent Ḥiǧāzī innovations (Al-Jallad 2020a, 61–63). The attested forms in Vat. Ar. 13 are listed in Table 12 below.

Table 12: Distal demonstrative pronouns by scribal hand

Hand	**MSG**	**FSG**	**MDU**	**MPL**
A	دلك, ذلك	تلكم, تلك (44r, 79r, 80r)	ذينك (33v)	اوليك
B		تلكم, تلك (70r)	—	اوليك
C		تلك		—
D	ذاك, ذلك (51v)			اوليك

This Ḥiǧāzī series of demonstrative pronouns is by far the most common in the early Christian corpus, so Vat. Ar. 13 is characteristic in that regard. Of the early Gospel MSS, the one exception to this ubiquity seems to be Sinai Arabic MS 70, which attests both *ḏālik(a)* and *ḏāk(a)*, though the latter is primarily in interrogative and adverbial phrases.

(75) مذ ذاك بدا يسوع يكرز ويقول توبوا فد دنا ملك السما (6v)
mḏ ḏʾk bdʾ yswʿ ykrz w-qwl twbwʾ qd dnʾ mlk ʾl-smʾ
'From that time he began preaching and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has drawn near"'

(76) فدنت منه تلاميده وقالت له لاي ذاك بالامثال تكلمهم (16r)
f-dnt mn-h tlʾmyd-h w-qʾlt l-h l-ʾy ḏʾk b-ʾl-ʾmṯʾl tklm-hm
'Then his disciples came to him and said to him, "Why do you talk to them in parables?"'

The MDU form *ḏaynnika* (or *ḏaynika*) occurs in Vat. Ar. 13 once, and is typical of other early Arabic Gospel MSS.

(77) وذينك اللصين الذين صلبا معه (Sinai Arabic MS 74, 64v)
w-ḏynk ʾl-lṣyn ʾlḏyn ṣlbʾ mʿ-h
'And those (DU) two thieves who were crucified with him…'

In one early Gospel, Sinai Arabic MS 72, a different form, apparently *ḏaynāk(a)*, is attested.

(78) وذيناك الصين الذين صلبا معه كانا يعيُراه (35v)
w-ḏynʾk ʾl-lṣyn ʾlḏyn ṣlbʾ mʿ-h yʿyurʾ-h
'And those two thieves who were crucified with him were cursing him'

The spelling of the MPL form in Vat. Ar. 13 is identical to the Quranic spelling, and presumably reflects Ḥiǧāzī *ʾulāʾik(a)*, or perhaps a *hamzah*-less form, such as *ʾulāyik(a)*. Al-Farrāʾ distinguishes between Ḥiǧāzī *ʾulāʾika* and different groups from among the Naǧdī tribes, some of whom attest either *ʾulēka*, *ʾullēka*, or *ʾulēlika*, but none of these Naǧdī forms are attested in Vat. Ar. 13 or the other early Christian MSS. Elsewhere in this corpus, the *plene* and defective spelling of the Ḥiǧāzī form is the norm, with both spellings occurring in some cases within the same MS.

(79) واوليك الذين دعيوا فلم يكونوا اهلا (Sinai Arabic MS 75, 22v)
w-ʾwlyk ʾlḏyn dʿywʾ f-lm ykwnwʾ ʾhlʾ
'And those who were invited were not worthy'

(80) ان اولايك الذين يلبسون الثياب اللينه هم في بيوت الملوك
(Sinai Arabic MS 75, 11v)
ʾn ʾwlʾyk ʾlḏyn ylbswn ʾl-ṯyʾb ʾl-lynh hm fy bywt ʾl-mlwk
'Those who wear soft clothes are in the houses of kings'

Lastly, Vat. Ar. 13 attests addressee agreement in six instances, all of which involve the FSG distal demonstrative pronouns in the phrase في تلكم الايام *fy tlkm ʾl-ʾyʾm* 'in those days'.

(81) وفي تلكم الايام بعد ذلك الصيق والصنك (70v)
w-fy tlkm ʾl-ʾyʾm bʿd ḏlk ʾl-ḍyq w-ʾl-ḍnk
'And in those (FSG + PL) days, after that hardship and distress'

(82) لانه ستاتى ايام اذا ارتفع العروس عنهم عند ذلك يصومون في تلكم الايام
(79r)
l-ʾn-h s-tʾty ʾyʾm ʾḏ ʾrtfʿ ʾl-ʿrws ʿn-hm ʿnd ḏlk yṣwmwn fy tlkm ʾl-ʾyʾm
'Because there will come a day when the bridegroom will ascend from them, and then they will fast in those days (FSG + PL)'

The same phrase is attested without address agreement. In the following example, Jesus is addressing a group.

(83) ولولا ان تلك الايام تقصر وتصغر (42r)
w-lw-lʾ ʾn tlk ʾl-ʾyʾm tqṣr w-tṣġr
'And if those days do not shorten…'

It is thus optional, as it apparently is in the Quran (Van Putten 2022, 278). Such addressee agreement was in pre-Islamic poetry,

and the Quran, regular on any distal demonstrative pronoun, but here is relegated to the FSG and in one set phrase. As such, it is probably a stylistic feature meant to license its literary quality, and perhaps echo the language of the Quran specifically.

2.1. Locative Adverbs

The early Arabic grammarians report two series of locative adverbs, which, as with the demonstrative pronoun series, are distinguished by the presence of a prefixed *hā-* in the near series and an infixed *li-* on the far series. The compound forms of the far adverbs, with infixed *li*, are attributed to the dialects of the Ḥiǧāz, whereas those that lack infixed *li* are attributed to the tribes of the Naǧd (Al-Farrāʾ, *Luġāt al-Qurʾān*, 47–48). Thus, we have Naǧdī *hunāka* and Ḥiǧāzī *hunālika*. For the near series, Al-Farrāʾ (*Luġāt al-Qurʾān*, 22) reports that the distinction between Ḥiǧāzī and Naǧdī dialects is that, in the former, the *hā* prefix is obligatory on all locatives (and demonstratives), whereas in the Naǧdī dialects, the *hā* is optional. In the Quran only *hā*-compound forms occur (Van Putten 2022, 104–5, §4.5). This all contrasts with the epigraphic record from the pre-Islamic Levant, in which virtually all attested forms lack *hā* (Al-Jallad 2015, 79–86, §4.9; Al-Jallad 2020a, 26).

The distribution of locative adverbs in Vat. Ar. 13 is interesting. The near set is ubiquitously Ḥiǧāzī, regardless of scribal hand. I found no examples of *hunā*, only *hāhunā*. In the far series, both Ḥiǧāzī and Naǧdī forms occur. Their distribution, however, is not evenly distributed across scribal hands; instead, as we see

in Table 13, different hands display different rates of one over the other.

Table 13: Deictic adverbs by scribal hand

Hand	Near		Far	
	هاهنا	هنا	هنالك	هناك
A	20/20 (100%)	0/20	35/41 (83%)	6/41 (17%)
B	5/5 (100%)	0/5	2/4 (50%)	2/4 (50%)
C	—	—	3/6 (50%)	3/6 (50%)
D	4/4 (100%)	0/4	2/12 (17%)	10/12 (83%)

Hand A and Hand D display opposite preferences, with the earlier Hand A overwhelmingly using the Ḥiǧāzī *hunālika*, and the late Hand D vastly preferring the Nağdī *hunāka*. Hands B and C equally use both forms. Clearly, the scribes' grammatical and lexical preferences differed. As we have seen, Hand D is closest to what becomes normative prose-style Classical Arabic, and his preference here for *hunāka*, which becomes the default norm subsequently, fits the same pattern. On the other hand, the strong preference of Hand A for *hunālika* fits a context in which Ḥiǧāzī grammatical forms were more prestigious.

Hands B and C are closest to the kinds of variation found in the other early Gospel MSS. For example, Sinai Arabic MSS 74 (9th century CE) and 72 (897 CE), representatives of Kashouh's Family A (on this family from a textual standpoint, see Kashouh 2012, 86–96, §4.3), as well as Sinai Arabic MS 70 (10th century CE, Family D; Kashouh 2012, 123–25, §5.1.1) attest near *hāhunā* but far *hunāka*:

(84) امين اقول لكم ان هاهنا اناس وقوف لا يذوقون الموت حتي يرون بن الانسان اتيا فى ملكه (Sinai Arabic MS 74, 37v)

ʾmyn ʾqwl l-km ʾn hʾhnʾ ʾnʾs wqwf lʾ yḏwqwn ʾl-mwt ḥty yrwn bn ʾl-ʾnsʾn ʾtyʾ fy mlk-h

'Truly I say to you that there are people standing here who will not taste death until they see the son of man coming in his kingdom'

(85) حيث تكون الجثه هناك تجتمع النسور (Sinai Arabic MS 74, 54v)

ḥyṯ tkwn ʾl-ǧṯh hnʾk tǧtmʿ ʾl-nswr

"Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather"

(86) وقال لتلاميده اجلسوا هاهنا الي ان اذهب اصلى (Sinai Arabic MS 70, 32r)

w-qʾl l-tlʾmyd-h ʾǧlswʾ hʾhnʾ ʾly ʾn ʾḏhb ʾṣly

'And he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I go pray"'

(87) فقال له انهض وخذ الصبي وامه وانطلق الي مصر واقيم هناك حتي اعلمك (Sinai Arabic MS 70, 5r)

f-qʾl l-h ʾnhḍ w-ḫḏ ʾl-ṣby w-ʾm-h w-ʾnṭlq ʾly mṣr w-ʾqym hnʾk ḥty ʾʿlm-k

'And he said, "Get up and take the boy and his mother and go down to Egypt and stay there until I tell you"'

Sinai Arabic MS 75 (10th century CE, Family C; Kashouh 2012, 112–23, §4.5), however, attests primarily *hāhunā* and *hunālika*:

(88) فقالوا له ليس لنا هاهنا الا خمسه ارغفه وحوتين فقال لهم يسوع اتوني بهم هاهنا (15v)

f-qʾlw l-h lys hʾhnʾ ʾlʾ ḫmsh ʾrġfh w-ḥwtyn f-qʾl l-hm yswʿ ʾtw-ny b-hm hʾhnʾ

'And they said to him, "We only have five loaves and two fish here." And Jesus said to them, "Bring them here"'

(89) فلم يصنع هنالك ايات كثيره لقله ايمانهم به (15r)
f-lm yṣnʿ hnʾlk ʾyʾt kṯyrh l-qlh ʾymʾn-hm b-h
'And he did not do many signs there because of their lack of belief in him'

Thus, the shift over time from Ḥiǧāzī to Naǧdī forms in normative Classical Arabic prose appears to have happened more quickly with the far locative than the near one.

2.2. Relative Pronouns

Unlike with demonstrative pronouns, the grammarians do not indicate a clear division between Ḥiǧāzī and Naǧdī dialects when it comes to the form of the relative pronoun series. Al-Farrāʾ (*Luġāt al-Qurʾān*, 11) reports two main variants. One of these is that the tribe of Huḏayl was famous for inflecting the MPL form, i.e., *ʾallaḏūna* (NOM) / *ʾallaḏīna* (OBL). The other is a comment he makes that some Arabs (*baʿḍ al-ʿarab*) do not distinguish between SG and PL forms, apparently using a generalised *ʾallaḏī*, regardless of the number of the referent, as in مررت بالذي قالوا ذاك 'I passed the ones who said that'. However, the pre-Islamic epigraphic record from the Levant makes it clear that the pre-Islamic Arabic varieties from the Levant made use of a form identical to what in the Quran, and subsequent Classical Arabic prose, is the determinative pronoun, namely *ḏū* / *ḏī* / *ḏā*, "the one of" (Al-Jallad 2018a, 326; Al-Jallad 2020a, 49). These include Safaitic *ḏ* (MSG), *ḏ* / *ḏʾt* (FSG), and *ḏw* (MPL) (Al-Jallad 2015, 85–88), as well as דו *dw* in the Namārah inscription (Cantineau 1978, 49). The *ʾalla*-based forms are retentions of demonstrative forms from Proto-Central Semitic, paralleled by Hebrew הַלָּזֶה *hallâzɛ* et al. and Ugaritic *hnd*

'this (MSG)'. Al-Jallad (2018a, 8ff; 2020a, 60) argues that the dialects of the Ḥiǧāz innovated the relative pronoun based on these inherited demonstrative forms, which spread to other peninsular varieties (as they occur in pre-Islamic poetry), but not north into the Levant until after the Islamic conquests (see also Van Putten 2022, 101–2, §4.2).

In Vat. Ar. 13, the same relative pronouns that occur in, e.g., the Quran, and which seem to be the predominant forms across corpora, are likewise used. The typical orthographic variation involving the presence or absence of consonantal dotting, as well as the spelling of the MPL form with one *lām*s or two, occurs within and across scribal hands. The only morphological variation of consequence is in the FPL, where both *allātī* and *al-lawātī* occur. See Table 14 for the attested forms.

Table 14: Relative pronouns by scribal hand

Hand	MSG	FSG	MDU	MPL	FPL
A	الذي / الدى	التي / التى	اللدان (77v)	الدين / الذين	اللواتى (43r) اللاتى (44v)
B			—	اللذين / الذين	اللواتي (74r) الاتى (74v)
C			—	الدين/ الذين	—
D			اللَّذان (48r)	الذين	اللَّاتي (48v)

The two forms of the FPL relative pronoun—*ʾallawātī* and *ʾallātī*—are both well known from other corpora. One of these, *ʾallātī*, occurs in the Quran, though the other Quranic variant, spelled consonantally both الاى and الى, is not attested in Vat. Ar.

13.[4] The *ʾallawātī* variant is frequently mentioned as the main alternative to *ʾallātī* in later Classical Arabic texts (e.g., in Wright I: 271). In this case again, early variation in Vat. Ar. 13—with both Hand A and Hand B, the earliest two hands using both variants—gives way to the more typical Classical form *ʾallātī* in the latest scribal hand (D). The early hands differ from the other early Arabic Gospel MSS, which attest a FPL relative pronoun *ʾltyn*, presumably *ʾallatīn(a)*:

(90) وكان هناك نسوه كثره ينظرن من بعيد اللتين كُن اتبعن ليسوع من الجليل ليخدمنه (Sinai Arabic MS 72, 36r)

w-kʾn hnʾk nswh kṯrh ynẓrn mn bʿyd ʾlltyn kun ʾtbʿn l-yswʿ mn ʾl-ǧlyl l-yḫdmn-h

'And there were many women watching from far off who had followed Jesus from Galilee to serve him'

(91) حينيد يشبه ملك السما عسره عدارى تلك التين اخذن سرُجهن وخرجن يستقبلن الختن والعروس (Sinai Arabic MS 70, 29v)

ḥynyd yšbh mlk ʾl-smʾ ʿšrh ʿdʾry tlk ʾltyn ʾḫḏn sruǧ-hn w-ḫrǧn ystqbln ʾl-ḫtn w-ʾl-ʿrws

'The kingdom of heaven is like ten virgins, who took their lamps and went out to greet the bridegroom and wedding procession'

The form *ʾallatīn(a)* is straightforwardly an analogical creation: MSG *ʾallaḏī* : FSG *ʾallatī* :: MPL *ʾallaḏīna* : X = *ʾallatīna*. Whether or not this was purely a literary creation, or was generated by a speech community, and thus at least at one point part of a spoken

[4] This form was read variously, including *allāy* and *ʾallāʾī*, both of which possibly lie behind the consonantal text. For arguments in favour of /allāy/, see Van Putten (2022, 280, §A.4.5).

vernacular, is unclear. In any event, by the 11th century CE, the form that becomes typical of Classical Arabic prose, *ʾallātī*, becomes the typical form used in the Gospel MSS:

(92) حينيذً تشبه ملكوه السما لعشره عذارى الاتى اخذن مصابيحهن وخرجن للقا الختن (Vatican Borgiana Arabic MS 71, 43v)

ḥynyḏan tšbh mlkwh ʾl-smʾ l-ʿšrh ʿḏʾry ʾlʾty ʾḫḏn mṣʾbyḥ-hn w-ḫrǧn l-lqʾ ʾl-ḫtn

'Then the kingdom of heaven is like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom'

(93) حينيذ تشبه ملكوت السما لعشر عذاري اللاتى اخذن مصابيحهن وخرجن للقا الختن (Sinai Arabic MS 69, 40r)

ḥynyḏ tšbh mlkwt ʾl-smʾ l-ʿšr ʿḏʾry ʾllʾty ʾḫḏn mṣʾbyḥ-hn w-ḫrǧn l-lqʾ ʾl-ḫtn

'Then the kingdom of heaven is like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom'

2.3. Adverbs of Manner

Likewise, adverbs of manner that are built on *ka* + demonstrative pronouns attest either the prefixed *hā* in, e.g., **hākaḏā* 'in this way', or the infixed *li* in, e.g., **kaḏālika*, in all but one instance. As in other categories, there is both inter- and intra-scribal hand orthographic variation in the spelling of the prefixed *hā*, whether *plene* or defective. See Table 15 (facing page). Presumably the distribution of *hākaḏā* and *kaḏā*, as well as that of *kaḏālika* and *kaḏāka*, reflect the same kind of dialectal Ḥiǧāzī/Naǧdī distinctions that characterise the distribution of the relevant pronominal forms, though I have not found this explicitly mentioned by grammarians like Al-Farrāʾ.

Table 15: Adverbs of manner by scribal hand

Hand	***hākaḏā***	***kaḏālik***	***kaḏā***
A	هاكذا (80v), هكذا	كدلك, كذلك	كذا وكذا (82v)
B	هاكذا		—
C	هاكذي (1v, 3r, 4v), هاكدي (4v), هاكذا (4r), هكذا (4v)		
D	هكَذَا		

These compound forms—with *hā* and *li*—are the ones attested in the Quran, as well as in the early Christian Arabic MSS. Hand D is the only scribal hand to attest exclusively defective spellings, and Hand C is the only scribal hand to spell final **ā* with both *ʾalif* and *yāʾ* (dotted and undotted). Such كذي / كدي spellings are known from other corpora, including early Islamic-era papyri (Hopkins 1984, 15, §12.3) and Christian MSS (Blau 1966–1967, 83, §10.2.2), and is in fact attested in MSS of texts universally considered to be written in Classical Arabic (Wright 1896, I:266a).

2.4. Presentatives

Additionally, deictic elements are combined and used as presentatives in Vat. Ar. 13. Occasionally, the MSG demonstrative pronoun is used in this way, though, unlike in normative Classical Arabic, it occurs here with a plural referent (see Fischer 2002, 146–47, §248; Blau 1966–1967, 464, §363.2).

(94) هاذا ارباوك يفعلون ما لا يحل فعله فى السبت (17r–17v)
hʾḏʾ ʾrbʾw-k yfʿlwn mʾ lʾ yḥl fʿl-h fy ʾl-sbt
'Here are your disciples doing what is not allowed to do on the Sabbath'

As in Classical Arabic corpora, the combination of independent pronoun + *ḏā / ḏī / ʾulāʾi*, the latter element typically lacking *hā*, can be used as a presentative (Fischer 2002, 147, §279a).

(95) عند ذلك هُوذا المُسلِم لما راي ان يسوع قد شجب ندم (51v)
ʿnd ḏlk huwḏʾ ʾl-muslim lmʾ rʾy ʾn ysw ʿ qd šǧb ndm
'Then, behold the betrayer, when he saw that Jesus had been condemned, he felt regret'

When the deictic particle *hā* is present, however, it often stands in front of the pronoun, e.g., *hā-ʾana ḏā*, etc. (Fischer 2002, 147, §279b). Such constructions are likewise attested in Vat. Ar. 13.

(96) فلذلك هااذا ارسل اليكم انبيا وحكما وكتبه (40v)
f-l-ḏlk hʾ ʾnʾ ḏʾ ʾrsl ʾly-km ʾnbyʾ w-ḥkmʾ w-ktbh
'For this reason here I am sending to you prophets and sages and scribes'

(97) هانذا ارسلكم كالبهمِ بين الذياب (14r)
hʾnḏʾ ʾrsl-km k-ʾl-bhmi byn ʾl-ḏyʾb
'Here I am sending you like cattle among wolves'

(98) وقال لهم اهجعوا الآن وَاستريحُوا هَاهيذه الساعه قد حضرت وَابن البشر يسلِم في ايدي الخطَاه (53v)
w-qʾl l-hm ʾhǧʿwʾ ʾl-ʾān wa-stryḥūʾ hāhyḏh ʾl-sʾʿh qd ḥḍrt wa-bn ʾl-bšr yslm fy ʾydy ʾl-ḫṭāh
'And he said to them, "Lie back and relax, here the hour has arrived and the Son of Man will be handed over into the hands of sinners"'

In the Quran, a similar vocative construction, but with the *hā* element prefixed to both the pronoun and the demonstrative element, occurs هانتم هولا حججتم فيما لكم به علم *hā-antum hāwulāʾ ḥāǧağtum fī-mā la-kum bi-hī ʿilm* 'Here you are, having argued about that of which you have no knowledge' (Q3.66) (see Van Putten 2022, 279 for reference, the reconstructed phonetic realisation, and the translation). This is attested once in the Gospels of Vat. Ar. 13.

(99) هانحن اولا قد رفضنا جميع الاشيا وصحبناك (64v)
hʾnḥn ʾwlʾ qd rfḍnʾ ǧmyʿ ʾl-ʾšyʾ w-ṣḥbnʾ-k
'See, we are the ones who have left everything and followed you'

Another construction, consisting of the deictic *hā* + object particle *ʾiyyā* + pronominal suffix occurs occasionally in the MS, although the writing in this portion of the folio is slightly faded, so it is not certain.

(100) فان قال لكم حنيد قايل ان المسيح هاهنا او **هااياه** فلا تصدقوا (42r)
f-ʾn qʾl l-km ḥynyd qʾyl ʾn ʾl-msyḥ hʾhnʾ ʾw ***hʾʾyʾ-h*** *f-lʾ tṣdqwʾ*
'And if anyone tells you at that time, "The messiah is here!" or "Here he is!," do not believe it'

Finally, there is a hybrid form of sorts, in which the deictic particle *hā* immediately precedes the FSG demonstrative pronoun *hāḏihī*.

(101) وقال له يا عطمى هاهده التينه التي لعنتها قد يبست (67r)
w-qʾl l-h yʾ ʿẓym-y hʾhḏh ʾl-tynh ʾlty lʿnt-hʾ qd ybst
'And he said to him, "My Lord, here this fig that you cursed has withered!"'

While the latter is, as far as I know, unattested in the corpus of Christian Arabic MSS roughly contemporary with Vat. Ar. 13, presentatives of the sort *hā* + pronoun + demonstrative do occur. There, however, gender agreement is often neutralised, with either the pronominal element, the demonstrative, or both (for other examples, see Blau 1966–1967, 466, §365).

(102) هوده العذرا تحبل وتلد ابنا (Sinai Arabic MS 74, 2r)
hwdh ʾl-ʿḏrʾ tḥbl w-tld ʾbnʾ
'Behold, the virgin will be with child, and will give birth to a son'

(103) هوذا العذرا تحبل وتلد ابنا (Sinai Arabic MS 72, 3v)
hwḏʾ ʾl-ʿḏrʾ tḥbl w-tld ʾbnʾ
'Behold, the virgin will be with child, and will give birth to a son'

Elsewhere, the combination *hā* + pronoun is attested, as in the following example from Sinai Arabic MS 69 (1056 CE).

(104) هاهى البتول تحبل وتلد ابنا (6r)
hʾhy ʾl-btwl tḥbl w-tld ʾbnʾ
'Behold, the virgin will be with child, and will give birth to a son'

Occasionally, just *hā* is used, as in Sinai Arabic MS 111 (13th century CE).

(105) ها العذري تحبل وتلِد ابنًا (3r)
hʾ ʾl-ʿḏry tḥbl w-tlid ʾbnan
'Behold, the virgin will be with child, and will give birth to a son'

Vat. Ar. 13 stands out among the early Christian Arabic MSS in the diversity of forms attested. Gender agreement, but perhaps

not number agreement, is operative in Vat. Ar. 13, whereas it is not always so, or at least not consistently so, in other early Christian MSS.

2.5. Vocative Constructions

Both *yā* and *(yā) ʾayyuhā* occur in vocatives across Vat. Ar. 13. *Yā* is often, though not always, spelled defectively when following words beginning with *ʾalif*: ياولاد الافاعي 'Oh, you sons of snakes!' (19r). There are a number of set phrases involving *yā* + noun, many exhibiting characteristic shortening of the 1SG pronominal suffix, as in *ʾabati*, or the suffixed elements *-ā* and *-āh* (on which, see Fischer 2002, 95–96, §§157b–58), or the reduced nominal form *ṣāḥ(i)* (< **ṣāḥibī*) (Fischer 2002, 96, §159). The following is a complete list of vocative constructions that occur in the Gospels of Vat. Ar. 13.

2.5.1. *yā ʾabat(i)*

(106) فى ذلك الزمان اجاب يسوع عند ذلك وقال اشكر لك يابتِ رب السماوات والارض (17r)

fy ḏlk ʾl-zmʾn ʾǧʾb yswʿ ʿnd ḏlk w-qʾl ʾškr l-k yʾbti rb ʾl-smʾwʾt w-ʾl-ʾrḍ

'At that time Jesus answered then and said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of Heaven and earth"'

2.5.2. *yā ʾabatāh*

(107) وَجعل يصلِّي ويقوُل يا ابتَاه ان كَان الي ذلك سبيل فليجر عنِّي (53r)

wa-ǧʿl yṣllī w-yqūl yʾ ʾbtā-h ʾn kān ʾly ḏlk sbyl f-l-yǧr ʿn-nī

'And he began praying, "O Father, if there is a way, let [this cup] pass from me"'

2.5.3. *yā bunayy(i)*

(108) فقال لذلك المُخبَّل ثقْ يا بنيِّ (11v)
f-qʾl l-ḏlk ʾl-muḫbbal ṯq yʾ bnyyi
‘And he said to that lame man, “Believe, O my son!”’

2.5.4. *yā ʿağabāh*

(109) فراى ذلك ارباوه فعجبوا وقالوا يا عجباه للبينه كيف يبست ساعه ان لعنها (35r)
f-rʾy ḏlk ʾrbʾw-h f-tʿğbwʾ w-qʾlwʾ yʾ ʿğbʾ-h l-l-tynh kyf ybst sʾʿh ʾn lʿn-hʾ
‘And his disciples saw that and were amazed and said, “Whoa! How did the fig tree dry up immediately when he cursed it?!”’

2.5.5. *yā ṣāḥi*

(110) فقال له يا صاح كيف دخلت الي هاهنا (37r)
f-qʾl l-h yʾ ṣʾḥ kyf dḫlt ʾly hʾhnʾ
‘And he said to him, “Hey you, how did you enter here?”’

2.5.6. *yā habatāh*

(111) فقال لها دعى يا هبتاه السين ان يشبعوا بدوا (57v)
f-qʾl l-hʾ dʿy yʾ hbtʾ-h ʾl-bnyn ʾn yšbʿwʾ bdwʾ
‘And he said to her, “O woman, let the sons eat and be filled first”’

2.5.7. *yā hāḏā*

(112) فمد ايسوع يده اليه وقال له قد شت يا هذا فتطهر من برصك (78r)
f-md ʾyswʿ yd-h ʾly-h w-qʾl l-h qd šyt yʾ hḏʾ f-tṭhr mn brṣ-k

‘And Jesus stretched out his hand and said to him “I want [to heal you], O man, so be healed from your leprosy!”’

2.6. Compound Interrogative **lima* ‘why?’

A number of interrogative pronouns occur in Vat. Ar. 13, all of which are known from other corpora, though the frequency and distribution of several are rather unique and deserve note (see below, Ch. 8, §2.0). One of those interrogatives attested here is **lima* ‘why?’, which is ubiquitously spelled short, as لم, in Vat. Ar. 13.

(113) لم خرجتم الي القفل (16r)
lm ḫrǧtm ʾly ʾl-qfl
‘Why have you come into the desert?’

(114) لم تدعوني صالحا ليس صلح الا الله الواحد (31v)
lm tdʿw-ny ṣʾlḥʾ lys ṣlḥ ʾlʾ ʾllh ʾl-wʾḥd
‘Why do you call me righteous? There is no one righteous except God alone’

The short spelling is by far the more common in, e.g., the Quran, though long spellings of **lima* and other compound interrogatives containing **mā*, occur (Van Putten 2022, 281, §A.4.7). I have not encountered it in the other early Christian Arabic MSS, and Blau does not mention its occurrence either.

2.7. Suffix Conjugation Passives of II-*Y/W* Roots

The vocalisation of the passive of perfectives of II-*Y/W* roots, the so-called ‘hollow’ verbs, constituted a point of diversity in the pre- and early Islamic period. The grammarians Sībawayh (*Al-*

Kitāb, IV: 342–44) and Al-Farrāʾ (*Luġāt al-Qurʾān*, 14) both mention three possible realisations (examples of **quwila* 'it was said'): (1) *qīla*, according to Al-Farrāʾ typical of the dialects of the Ḥiǧāz; (2) *qūla*, typical of Faqʿas and Dubayr, branches of the ʾAsad confederation; and (3) *qÿla*,[5] typical of the Qays, ʿUqayl, and the 'common people' of the ʾAsad confederation. The Ḥiǧāzī form, as expected, is the only form represented in the Quranic consonantal text, written قيل, and this is the only form attested in Hands A, B, and D. In the portions produced by Hand C, however, we find both the قيل spelling as well as, in two instances, اقيل. In fact, the latter is used twice whereas the former only once.

This spelling of II-*Y/W* root passives with a prefixed *ʾalif* in the suffix conjugation is well known from other early Christian Arabic MSS (Blau 1966–1967, 161), including not only اقيل and other II-*Y/W* roots, such as اسيق 'it was driven', but also II-ʾ roots, like اسيل 'he was asked', and even geminate II = III, i.e., geminate, roots, e.g., أُرد 'I was restored'. Blau (1966–1967, 160–61) argues that these spellings are the result of a reanalysis of the verb stem of this class of verbs, from form I to form IV, apparently by analogy due to overlap in the passive of the imperfective: *yuqām* : *ʾuqīm* :: *yuqāl* : X = *ʾuqīl*. However, this spelling remains in use in later Christian MSS, dating in some cases into the 15th century CE (or later), when vocalisations make it likely we are dealing

[5] This third form is the subject of some debate. Sībawayh describes this as *ʾišmām*, which Van Putten (2022, 30–31, including n. 8) argues is characterised by lip rounding, which results in a high /y/ vowel best represented when long as /ÿ/ and when short as /ü/. I have followed this convention here throughout.

with an underlying *qūla* realisation. Note the following pair of verses from Sinai Arabic MS 80 (1469 CE), where on the same folio both spellings are used, each written with a *ḍammah* over the *yāʾ*.

(115) قد سمعتم انهُ اقيُل (10v)
qd smʿtm ʾn-hu ʾqyul
'You have heard that it was said…'

(116) قد سمعتم انهُ قيُل (10v)
qd smʿtm ʾn-hu qyul
'You have heard that it was said…'

It might be tempting to think of the *ḍammah* in this case as merely orthographic, perhaps to indicate the passive realisation, but the same spelling is the one used in, e.g., Ibn Ḫālawayh's *Kitāb al-Badīʿ* when he reports on the *qūla* variant among Quranic readers (see, e.g., MS Ar. 3051, 25v; note that the spelling there is قُيل, with the *ḍammah* on the *qāf*, whereas in the Christian MSS it is more commonly written on the *yāʾ*). Stokes (2022, 169–71) suggests that *qūla* was a popular realisation of II-*Y/W* passive forms in the suffix conjugation, but that, as Ḥiǧāzī forms spread and became prestigious, the Ḥiǧāzī form *qīla* spread as well. Such a realisation, closer to the passive of form IV, could have led to the reanalysis Blau proposes.

Another alternative worth mentioning here is that the *ʾalif* represents a prothetic vowel appended due to the elision of short vowels in open, unaccented syllables. The historical passive of **QWL* was presumably **quwila*. However, the three surface forms mentioned by the early grammarians—*qūla*, *qīla*, and *qūla*—were likely the results of different intermediate forms. For example,

qūla is best understood as reflecting **quwila* > *quwula* (vowel harmony) > *qūla*, whereas the opposite harmony likely stands behind *qīla*, i.e., **quwila* > **qiwila* (> **qiyila*) > *qīla*. The third variant, *qūla*, is trickier, but might reflect **quwila* > **quyila*. The Christian spellings قيُل versus اقيُل can straightforwardly be read as /qyúl/ versus /Vqyúl/ or even long /qyūl/ versus /Vqyūl/ (where V = a non-phonemic prothetic vowel of indeterminate quality), both of which < **qyúl* < *quyúla*. This stress may appear at first rather strange, since we expect antepenultimate stress in these cases. However, the Christian Arabic corpus in general attests spellings with prothetic *ʾalif*s, which Blau (1966–1967, 62–63, §3.3) interprets as evidence of a (historically) penultimate stress shift: اصغير /Vṣgīr/ 'small' and اقشعريره /Vqšaʿrīrah/ 'shudders'. Vat. Ar. 13, while typically rather conservative in this aspect of its orthography, attests two spellings that appear to constitute evidence for prothesis: املوك presumably /Vmlūk/ 'kings' (fol. 29r) and القاهم presumably /Vlqā-hum/ 'he found them' (fol. 56r). Internal passives with the same stress pattern are attested in a number of modern dialects, e.g., in Najdi: *sríg* alongside *sirǵ* 'it was stolen', contrasted with active *sírag* 'he stole' (Ingham 2008, 332, §2.2.4.5).

Whatever the underlying realisation might have been, the important point here is that Hand C, alone among the scribal hands in Vat. Ar. 13, reflects an orthographic innovation primarily associated with—and attested in—the writing tradition attested in other Christian MSS from the Levant.

2.8. Apocopates of Geminate Verbs (II = III Roots)

It is well known that imperatives and apocopates of geminate (II = III) roots have two possible shapes, according to the grammarians, either vCCvC or (v)CvCC, e.g., *Vrdud* or *Vrudda/u*. The former, unmetathesised form is characteristic of dialects of the Ḥiǧāz, whereas the latter, metathesised form is associated with the Naǧd (Sībawayh, *Al-Kitāb*, III: 529–32). The Quran attests both, but the Ḥiǧāzī form is much more frequent than the Naǧdī one (Van Putten 2022, 108, gives the count of 43 instances of the Ḥiǧāzī versus only eight of the Naǧdī). Likewise, Vat. Ar. 13 attests both unmetathesised/Ḥiǧāzī and metathesised/Naǧdī forms. Note the following examples.

2.8.1. Unmetathesised Forms

(117) طوبا لمن لم يسكك في امرى (15v, Hand A)
ṭwbʾ l-mn lm yškk fy ʾmr-y
'Blessed is the one who does not doubt me'

(118) الحق اقول لكم ان من قال لهدا الجبل زل من مكانك وقع في البحر ثم لم يشكك في نفسه بل يومن ويصدق ان الذي يقوله يكون ويتم فليكن له ما قال (67r Hand B)
ʾl-ḥq ʾqwl l-km ʾn mn qʾl l-hdʾ ʾl-ǧbl zl mn mkʾn-k w-qʿ fy ʾl-bḥr ṯm lm yškk fy nfs-h bl ywmn w-yṣdq ʾn ʾlḏy yqwl-h ykwn w-ytm f-l-ykn l-h mʾ qʾl
'Truly I tell you that whoever says to this mountain, "Move from your spot and fall into the ocean!" and then does not doubt himself but has faith and believes that what he says will happen, let whatever he says happen'

(119) وَقال لهُ وان شَكَّ الناس فيك احمعوُنَ وَخذلوك لم اخذلك ولم اشكك فيك (47v, Hand D)

wa-qʾl la-hu w-ʾn šakka ʾl-nʾs fyk ʾğmʿūna wa-ḫdlw-k lm ʾḫdl-k w-lm ʾškk fy-k

'And he said to him, "Even if everyone doubted you and forsook you, I would not forsake you nor doubt you"'

(120) اجاب ايسوع فقال لهم احذروا ان يضلكم احد لانه سياتى كثير باسمى وبقول كل واحد منهم انى انا المسح حقا فيضلل بهم ناس كثير (41r, Hand A)

ʾğʾb ʾysw' f-qʾl l-hm ʾḥdrwʾ ʾn yḍl-km ʾḥd l-ʾn-h s-yʾty kṯyr b-ʾsm-y w-yqwl kl wʾḥd mn-hm ʾn-y ʾnʾ ʾl-msyḥ ḥqʾ f-yḍll b-hm nʾs kṯyr

'Jesus answered and said to them, "Beware that no one lead you astray, because many will come in my name and each one will say, "I am truly the Messiah," and many people will be led astray by them"'[6]

(121) الحق اقول لكم ليفرحن به اشد من فرحه بالتسعه والسعين الى لم تضلل (30r, Hand A)

ʾl-ḥq ʾqwl l-km l-yfrḥn b-h ʾšd mn frḥ-h b-ʾl-tsʿh w-ʾl-tsʿyn ʾlty lm tḍll

'Truly I tell you that he will rejoice more than his rejoicing in the 99 who did not go astray'

2.8.2. Metathesised Form

(122) قال له الصفا ان سكوا فيك اجمعون لم اسك انا فيك (71v, Hand B)

qʾl l-h ʾl-ṣfʾ ʾn škwʾ fy-k ʾğmʿwn lm ʾšk ʾnʾ fy-k

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[6] Note in this example the difference between the subjunctive of form IV, which exhibits the expected form *yḍl*, presumably /yuḍill(a)/, and the jussive of form I *tḍll*, presumably /tVḍlul/.

'Peter said to him, "Even if all of them doubt you, I will not doubt you"'

(123) ولم يحب ان نعلم بمكانه احد (57v, Hand A)
w-lm yḥb ʾn yʿlm b-mkʾn-h ʾḥd
'And he did not want anyone to know where he was'

(124) لم يرُدّ عليهم جوَابًا (50r, Hand D)
lm yrudd ʿly-hm ǧwāban
'He did not reply to them'

Interestingly, the metathesised versus unmetathesised forms are not equally likely across the MS; rather, different scribes appear to have preferred one or the other. In fact, most examples occur in portions copied by Hand A; Hands B and D attest only one unmetathesised form each, by my count, against at least four metathesised forms. Hand A therefore apparently preferred the Ḥiǧāzī unmetathesised form, whereas Hand D preferred the metathesised one. This fits the pattern of these two scribal hands in other domains of grammar as well, where Hand A prefers Ḥiǧāzī forms, but Hand D prefers those forms that become normative in Classical Arabic. This is a pattern we have seen, and will continue to encounter, throughout this study.

2.9. Imperatives of I-ʾ Roots

Imperatives of I-ʾ roots typically attest two forms, one when preceded by a proclitic *wa-* or *fa-*, and another when not. Historically, this was due to a phonetic rule, whereby **ʾVʾ* sequences became *ʾV*, so **ʾiʾti* 'bring! (MSG)' becomes *ʾīt*. This would not operate, however, with the proclitics *fa- / wa-*, i.e., **fa-ʾti / *wa-ʾti*.

In the Quran, this resulted in the following by-forms (Van Putten 2022, 271).

(125) ايت (Q10.15) / فات (Q2.258)
ʾīt / fāt
‘come! (MSG)’ / ‘bring! (MSG)’[7]

This same allomorphy is reflected in the *ʿArabiyyah* corpus as well (Fischer 2002, 128, §§237–38).

(126) وأجر / أوجر
وأتلف or وآئتلف / إيتلف
ʾūğur / wa-ʾğur
ʾītalif / wa-ʾtalif
‘reward! (MSG)’
‘unite! (MSG)’

In Vat. Ar. 13, imperatives of I-ʾ roots occur in both contexts. When not preceded by *fa-* or *wa-*, the Quranic and Classical forms occur mostly as expected:

(127) ايذن لابنى هاذين ان يجلسا معك احد هما عن يمينك والاخر عن شمالك فى ملكك (33r)
ʾyḏn l-ʾbn-y hʾḏyn ʾn yğlsʾ mʿ-k ʾḥd-hmʾ ʿn ymyn-k w-ʾl-ʾḫr ʿn šmʾl-k fy mlk-k
‘Permit these two sons of mine to sit with you, one on your right and the other on your left, in your kingdom’

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[7] Van Putten (2018b; 2022, §5.2) argues convincingly that the language behind the Quranic consonantal text reflects the loss of the *hamzah* in this position. Therefore, **faʾti* was likely realised as *fāt* in the Ḥiğāzī dialect behind the Quran.

(128) ايتوني به الي هاهنا (61v)
ʾytw-ny b-h ʾly hʾhnʾ
'Bring him to me here'

In at least one instance, however, the imperative of *ʾaḏina* 'he permitted', is attested with a prefixed *fa-*, but spelled as if it were unprefixed:

(129) اجاب الصفا فقال له يا سيد ان كنت انت فايذن لي ان اتيك علي الما (24r)
ʾǧʾb ʾl-ṣfʾ f-qʾl l-h yʾ syd ʾn knt ʾnt f-ʾyḏn l-y ʾn ʾty-k ʿly ʾl-mʾ
'Peter answered and said to him, "Lord, if it is really you, then let me come to you on the water"'

If the phonetic rule that determined the allomorphy were still active, we would expect the spelling فاذن. It is possible, then, that this is a hyper-correction, where the scribe misused a form associated with a register with phonetic rules that were not active in the register(s) and varieties with which he was more familiar. Alternatively, we might imagine that use of ايذن here merely reflects a generalisation of *ʾīḏan* to all contexts. In this case, the spelling فايذن would represent a kind of pausal spelling that was not characteristic of, e.g., the Quran.

2.10. Nouns Ending in *-*ā* + Pronominal Suffix

In two places in the Gospels of Vat. Ar. 13, both in sections copied by Hand A, we find nouns ending in *-ā* (< **ē* < **ay(V)*) with pronominal suffixes. These should theoretically result in the same

realisation, but they do not. In one case, we get the expected outcome, spelled with *ʾalif* + pronominal suffix, whereas in the other we find the text pointed as if with a *tāʾ marbūṭah*.

(130) فلما كان باخراها ماتت المراه ايضا (37v)
f-lmʾ kʾn b-ʾḫrʾ-hʾ mʾtt ʾl-mrʾh ʾyḍʾ
'And then it had all happened, the woman died as well'

(131) واسان يطحنان في الرحا معا يطلق باحدتهما ورفض الاحرى (43r)
w-ʾṯntʾn yṭḥnʾn fy ʾl-rḥʾ mʿʾ ynṭlq b-ʾḥdt-hmʾ w-yrfḍ ʾl-ʾḫry
'And two women (FDU) will be grinding at the mill together; he will take one and reject the other'

The phenomenon exhibited in the latter example, whereby a noun ending in *-*ā* was reanalysed as ending in *-a(h)*, could be related or identical to the one discussed by Blau (1966–1967, 117–18, §24.3.1.1), who suggests that the homophony between the two outside of construct led to their conflation, which is attested in modern dialects. A possible alternative explanation for the above examples from Vat. Ar. 13 is that the consonantal spelling of the Ur-text from which Hand A copied exhibited an archaic spelling that the scribe did not recognise. In the Quran, as well as a few early epigraphic inscriptions, III-*Y* roots are spelled with a *yāʾ* (though often without dots, which were optional), even when a pronominal suffix was included, as a consonantal rendering of the following illustrates: فما اسن الله حير مما اسكم *f-mā ʾatāni llāhu ḫayrun mimmā ʾatākum* 'What Allah has granted me is far greater than what he has granted you' (Q27.36). Historically, this spelling reflected the difference between final *-*aw(V)* (< III-*W* roots), which were realised *-ā* in the Quran, and *-*ay(V)* (< III-*Y* roots), likely realised *-ē* in the Quran (Van Putten 2017;

2022, 133–35, §5.8). Once the realisation of both as *ā* became widespread and normative, the orthography shifted over time to reflect this. The shift in orthographic habit happened, in general, fairly quickly, with remnants only sparsely attested.[8] And it turns out that precisely this form, *ʾiḥdā-humā*, seems to retain this spelling longer than most other eligible words, although it was not otherwise common in early Christian Arabic MSS (Blau 1966–1967, 237, §§129.2). Indeed, I suggest that the scribe encountered skeletal احديهما, did not recognise it, and interpreted it as reflecting an underlying *tāʾ*.

2.11. Elative/Superlative of *ḫayr* 'better'

The adjective *ḫayr* 'good' and its antonym *šarr* 'bad, evil' function in the *ʿArabiyyah* and Quran also as comparative/superlative adjectives (*al-tafḍīl*) with no alternation in morphology. Subsequently, comparative/superlative forms for both based on the typical morphology—namely *ʾafʿal*—were created: *ʾaḫyar* 'better/best' and *ʾašarr* 'more/most evil'. These occur in a number of corpora, including Judaeo-Arabic and Christian Arabic MSS, but also MSS in which otherwise Classical Arabic norms are characteristic (Blau 1966–1967, 233, §126; Hopkins 1984, 112, §90; Fischer 2002, 77, §124.2). In Vat. Ar. 13, both *ḫayr* and *ʾḫyr* (presumably *ʾaḫyar*, but also possibly *ʾaḫēr*; on the latter, see Blau 1960, 50, §40b) occur. Once again, however, the distribution is

[8] As in, e.g., Or. 298, a MS of *Ġarīb al-Ḥadīt*, with أُولَيها and أُخرَيها (fol. 2r, ln. 14).

by hand, with Hand A using the older form, and Hand C opting for the newer, analogical one:

(132) لانه خير لك ان تدخل الى حياه ملكوت السما بلا يد من ان نقع في نار الححيم ولك يدان (63r, Hand A *bis*)

l-ʾn-h ẖyr l-k ʾn tdẖl ʾly ḥyʾh mlkwt ʾl-smʾ b-lʾ yd mn ʾn tqʿ fy nʾr ʾl-ğḥym w-l-k ydʾn

'Because it is better for you to enter into the life of the kingdom of heaven without a hand, than for you to fall into the fire of hell with both hands'

(133) اخير لك ان يصل واحد من اوصالك ولا كل جسدك يقع في جهنم (4v–5r, Hand C *bis*)

ʾẖyr l-k ʾn yḍl wʾḥd mn ʾwṣʾl-k w-lʾ kl ğsd-k yqʿ fy ğhnm

'If it better for you that one of your members be lost but your whole body not fall into hell'

Hand C once again patterns with other early Christian Arabic scribal patterns against the other scribal hands, which attest variant forms.

CHAPTER 5. MORPHOSYNTAX: NOMINAL CASE

It is well-known that Classical Arabic attests a set of inflectional morphemes to mark nominal case and indefiniteness on SG nouns and/or unboundness on SG, DU, and PL nouns, referred to in Arabic as *ʾiʿrāb* (case markers) and *tanwīn* (nasalisation). Based on comparative Semitic and internal Arabic evidence, the Classical Arabic system can in general be reconstructed for Proto-Arabic (Hasselbach 2013, 322–26, §6.5; Al-Jallad and Van Putten 2017).[1] The *ʾiʿrāb* and *tanwīn* morphemes reconstructible for Proto-Arabic, and assumed in the analysis throughout the chapter, are as follows (see Table 16, overleaf).[2]

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[1] Jonathan Owens has frequently (1998a; 1998b; 2006–2009; 2015) argued against the existence of the case system that is reconstructed here in Proto-Arabic, and indeed questioned whether a single Proto-Arabic can be posited to have existed at all. See Huehnergard (2017, 12–14) and Al-Jallad and Van Putten (2017a; 2017b) for thorough discussions of Owens's methodological assumptions, as well as problems associated with reconstructing multiple proto-Arabics, both with and one without case, based on the absence of nominal case in modern dialects. The evidence for the existence of the morpho-syntactic nominal case inflectional system reconstructed here, both within Arabic and in numerous related Semitic languages, is more than sufficient for its reconstruction in Proto-Arabic (on Proto-Semitic case, and the evidence from Arabic, see also Hasselbach 2013).

[2] As Pat-El (2012) shows, the definite article is not reconstructible to the ancestor of Arabic, called Proto-Central Semitic, but rather spread areally over time among these languages. Proto-Arabic almost certainly

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Table 16: Case (*ʾiʿrāb*) and nasalisation (*tanwīn*) reconstructible for Proto-Arabic

	State	NOM	GEN	ACC
SG	ABS	*-un* كتاب *kitāb-un*	*-in* كتاب *kitāb-in*	*-an* كتابا *kitāb-an*
	CST	*-u* كتاب *kitāb-u*	*-i* كتاب *kitāb-i*	*-a* كتاب *kitāb-a*
DU	ABS	*-āni* كتابان *kitāb-āni*	*-ayni* كتابين *kitāb-ayni*	
	CST	*-ā* كتابا *kitāb-ā*	*-ay* كتابي *kitāb-ay*	
MPL	ABS	*-ūna* طالبون *ṭālib-ūna*	*-īna* طالبين *ṭālib-īna*	
	CST	*-ū* طالبو(ا) *ṭālib-ū*	*-ī* طالبي *ṭālib-ī*	
FPL	ABS	*āt-un* طالبات *ṭālibāt-un*	*āt-in* طالبات *ṭālibāt-in*	
	CST	*āt-u* طالبات *ṭālibāt-u*	*āt-i* طالبات *ṭālibāt-i*	
Diptote	ABS	*u-ø* أسود *ʾaswad-u*	*a-ø* أسود *ʾaswad-a*	
	CST	*-u* أسود *ʾaswad-u*	*-i* أسود *ʾaswad-i*	*-a* أسود *ʾaswad-a*

lacked a definite article (Al-Jallad 2022), so the [–definiteness] feature of *tanwīn* on singular triptotic nouns is not reconstructible to Proto-Arabic. Rather, as in Proto-Semitic, nasalisation (*tanwīn*) served to mark unbound/absolute state on nouns, as it still does with the DU and sound MPL in numerous pre-modern Arabic corpora, including the Quran, early Christian Arabic MSS, and early Islamic-era papyri, in addition to the *ʿArabiyyah*.

Based on transcriptions, as well as orthographic patterns in the epigraphic record, it is clear that already in the pre-Islamic period this system had been reduced in some varieties, and lost completely in others (Al-Jallad 2015; 2017a; 2018a; Al-Jallad and Van Putten 2017). For example, evidence suggests that in the varieties represented in the Safaitic corpus of inscriptions, *tanwīn* had been lost, along with nominative and genitive inflection (a loss of word-final high vowels), but the accusative was retained (Al-Jallad 2015, 69–72, §4.6). In his explication of the traditional position regarding the linguistic history of Arabic, which centred around the presence/absence of the case (and verbal mood) system, Blau (1977) considered varieties in which case was lost to have been peripheral, believing that most pre-Islamic varieties of Arabic in the peninsula retained it until the period of the Islamic conquests. However, close study of the Quranic consonantal text suggests rather that already in the 6th century CE, if not earlier, the Proto-Arabic case system had been reduced in the Ḥiǧāz, and *tanwīn* lost completely (Van Putten and Stokes 2018; Van Putten 2022, 182–92). In a study of the Damascus Psalm Fragment, Al-Jallad (2020a, 69–73) has suggested that a continuation of Ḥiǧāzī-like dialects similar to that seen in the Quran, which he calls 'Old Ḥiǧāzī', constituted the first literary and colloquial prestige variety(ies) in the ʾUmayyad period in the Levant, such that the language of the Psalm fragment, with its vestigial accusative and (possible) retention of the genitive in non-word final position, represented a further evolution of the kind of partial case system attested in the Quran.

Christian monastic writing in Arabic began already in the ʾUmayyad period (Griffith 1997), and, as Al-Jallad (2020a) has persuasively argued, is part of a literary tradition that initially reflected not only a Quranic/Ḥiǧāzī-based orthography and writing tradition, but Ḥiǧāzī linguistic features as well, presumably including at most a partial case system. It was only subsequently, toward the end of the ʾUmayyad period, that the archaic case system associated with the *qaṣīdah* poetic corpus became prestigious, with its full *ʾiʿrāb* + *tanwīn* on triptotic nouns, and it was likely then that it was imposed on the oral recitation of the Quran (Al-Jallad 2020a, 63–73; Van Putten 2022, §§7.1–3). In this context, it is not clear when, and to what degree, the nominal case system was seen as a particularly meaningful feature among Christians (and others). Stokes (2023a; 2023b) looked at numerous Christian MSS, ranging from the 9th to 15th centuries CE, and found that the system attested in the Quranic consonantal text was often, though not ubiquitously, present, but occurred along with orthographic conventions adapted to represent various non-Quranic and non-Classical usages of *tanwīn*. Thus, the spread of the archaic system of *ʾiʿrāb* and *tanwīn* as a *sine qua non* of high literary style and performance, apparently associated with increasing popularity of the *qaṣīdah* as a vehicle for legitimacy among contenders to the leadership of the early Islamic community (Webb 2016, Chs 5–6; Al-Jallad 2020a, 69–73; Miller 2024, §§3, 8–9), likely gained popularity only in a very uneven fashion, and, in the early Christian writings at least, seems to have competed with other offshoots of Proto-Arabic case. Any analysis of

nominal case in early Islamic-era texts must therefore resist a teleological approach that assumes the ubiquitous prestige of one manifestation over another. Relatedly, examinations of this feature in pre-modern Arabic corpora should pay attention to the different components of the system individually. It is possible for case to be retained, e.g., when non-word final, but lost elsewhere, such as when word final, or for one element to be retained while the others lost (as in Gəʿəz, for example, which retained the accusative but initially merged, and then lost, the nominative and genitive). Further, as will be argued below, different case systems can co-occur in one and the same text. Priority should thus be given to thorough documentation and description, and contextualisation within the linguistic landscape of the early Islamic period.

The present chapter aims to describe the manifestations of the nominal case system visible in the consonantal spelling of Hands A, B, and C, as well as both the consonantal spellings and vocalisations of Hand D. For each, parallels from other relevant early corpora will be adduced to contextualise the data. As we will see, the case system attested in Vat. Ar. 13 is very close to the one reconstructible for Proto-Arabic, much more so than in contemporary Gospel MSS, though sharing features with the latter as well. We begin with spellings of triptotic case inflection, followed by DU and, finally, sound MPL inflection.

1.0. Nominal Case on Triptotes

Of the triptotic inflectional categories, indefinite accusative is the only one that is visible in consonantal spellings of nouns, unless

they end in either *tāʾ marbūṭah*[3] or final long-vowel sequences, in which no case is visible. For that reason, we begin our discussion of triptotes on singular and broken plural patterns with the accusative, based on the distribution of spellings with the *ʾalif* that marks the indefinite accusative, called in Arabic *ʾalif al-tanwīn* (§5.1.1). After looking closely at the distribution of the *ʾalif al-tanwīn*, we will look at genitive (§5.1.2) and nominative inflection (§5.1.3) as attested in Hand D, the only hand that indicates word-final short case vowels. Following these categories, we study a subset of nouns—five in number, and therefore referred to in Arabic grammar as *al-ʾasmāʾ al-ḫamsah* 'the five nouns'—the triptotic inflection of which is characterised by a long vowel, spelled *plene*, when in construct (§5.1.4). The data from another subset of triptotes the spelling of which indicates the case of the noun in consonantal spellings is the so-called *ʾasmāʾ mamdūdah*, nouns ending in **āʾV*, will then be examined (§5.1.5). When a pronominal suffix is added to nouns in this category, their case is represented orthographically with a glide homorganic with the quality of the case vowel (when nominative or genitive), i.e., اسما *ʾsmʾ* 'names', but اسماوهم *ʾsmʾw-hm* 'their names (nom)' / اسمايهم *ʾsmʾy-hm* 'their names (GEN)' / اسماهم *ʾsmʾ-hm* 'their names (ACC)'. The final kind of triptotic noun for which we have data is the noun **bVdʾ*, 'beginning', which is spelled with a final glide indicating case (§5.1.6).

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[3] The feminine ending **-at* was possibly diptotic in Proto-Arabic. For the evidence and arguments, see Van Putten (2017b).

1.1. Accusative / *Alif al-Tanwīn* and *Fatḥa(tān)* Spellings

Across the MS as a whole, virtually all *ʾalif al-tanwīn* spellings—approximately 99 percent—occur in accusative contexts. The *ʾalif al-tanwīn* thus primarily serves in Vat. Ar. 13 to mark accusatives—objects, adverbs, and nouns governed by subordinating particles like **ʾinna* and **ʾanna*—corresponding to the system in the Quran, the *ʿArabiyyah*, and indeed as is reconstructible for Proto-Arabic. The data on the distribution of *ʾalif al-tanwīn / fatḥa(tān)* across the entire MS is presented in Table 17.

Table 17: Number of *ʾalif al-tanwīn* in total number of indefinite accusative contexts, whole MS

	ʾalif al-tanwīn	No *ʾalif al-tanwīn*	Total
Accusative Contexts	664	31	695
Non-Accusative Contexts	7		
Total	671		

As part of this system, if a noun is spelled with *ʾalif al-tanwīn* (+/– *fatḥatān* in Hand D), any orthographically eligible attributive adjective modifying the noun is typically written with it as well. In six places, however, a 'Dialectal *Tanwīn*' distribution is attested, in which the noun is spelled with the relevant inflection, but the adjective lacks it. Of these, five of six (83 percent) occur in Hand D sections, with another in a section copied by Hand C. Examples of this practice include.

(134) وقالوُا له حقًا يقينا (51r, Hand D)
w-qʾluwʾ l-h ḥqan yqynʾ
'And they said to him, "very truly…"'

(135) قد بلغ مِن جَفايكم حتى لم تسهروا معي ساعةً واحده (53r, Hand D)
qd blġ min ǧafʾy-km ḥty lm tshrwʾ mʿ-y sʾʿtan wʾḥdh
'Your eyelids became so heavy that you were not able to stay awake with me even one hour?'

(136) ومن سخرك ملا واحد اصحبه ميلين (5r, Hand C)
w-mn sẖr-k myl-ʾ wʾḥd ʾṣḥb-h mylyn
'Whoever makes you go one mile with him, go with him two miles'

While some of these occur in contexts that may be considered pausal, that is not universally the case, as can be seen in the last example. Such a 'Dialectal *Tanwīn*' distribution of case marking occurs in genitive contexts as well, and is paralleled by other corpora (see §4.0 below).

There are two categories of difference from the Proto-Arabic case system as it relates to the distribution of *ʾalif al-tanwīn* attested in Vat. Ar. 13: (1) accusative spellings in non-accusative contexts, and (2) lack of accusative marking on eligible words in accusative contexts. The first kind of atypical inflection occurs when a nominal form is written with *ʾalif al-tanwīn*, but occurs in a non-accusative syntactic context. There are by my count seven such forms, though it should be noted this number counts nouns and attributive adjectives separately. In keeping with a pattern attested in numerous domains of the grammar of the MS, these examples—which cluster in a few verses—each occur in direct speech. All examples occur in portions of the MS produced by Hand A. The contexts, along with each example, are provided as follows.

1.1.1. Predicate of Nominal Clause

(137) فليسا الان اثنان بل انما هما جسدا واحدا (31r)
f-lysʾ ʾl-ʾn ʾṯnʾn bl ʾnmʾ hmʾ ǧsdʾ wʾḥdʾ
'So they (du) are no longer two, but rather they are one flesh'

1.1.2. *ʾaḥad* 'someone'

(138) فلم يقدر احدا منهم ان يجبه مرجوعا ولم يجتر احدا منهم على مسلته بعد ذلك (38v)
f-lm yqdr ʾḥdʾ mn-hm ʾn yǧb-h mrǧwʿ w-lm yǧtr ʾḥdʾ mn-hm ʿly mslt-h bʿd ḏlk
'And no one of them was able to rebut him, and no one of them dared to ask him anything after that'

1.1.3. Subject of Passive Verb

(139) لانه لا يجتنا من الجرش تينا ولا يقطف من العوسج عنبا (82r)
l-ʾn-h lʾ yǧtnʾ mn ʾl-ǧrš tynʾ w-lʾ yqṯf mn ʾl-ʿwsǧ ʿnbʾ
'Because a fig is not picked from a thornbush, nor is a grape picked from boxthorn'

1.1.4. Final Noun in *ʾIḍāfah*

(140) كنت غربا غير معروفا (45v)
knt ġrybʾ ġyr mʿrwfʾ
'I was a stranger, unknown…'

In the first example above, it is possible that the scribe understood the negator *laysā* to subsequently imply *kān*. The accu-

satives *ǧsdʾ wʾḥdʾ* ‘one body’ in the verse above may also be explained by appealing to such an implied verb or particle.[4] Alternatively, it is possible that the use of the adjective *wāḥid* triggered *tanwīn*. This is common in other Gospel MSS, as well as other medieval corpora, and indeed the modern dialects, as we will see below (§4.0). Such an effect of *ʾaḥad* is evident in the second example, where it is twice marked with *tanwīn* while in subject position. The nominative syntactic contexts mentioned above—nominal predicates, the word *ʾaḥad*, and subjects of passive verbs—are among the few contexts in which the nominative is explicitly marked by Hand D (see §1.3 below).

The second kind of non-prototypical inflection consists of nouns in accusative contexts that are not spelled with *ʾalif al-tanwīn*. While examples of the absence of inflection occur in Hands A, B, and C, Hand C is disproportionately represented, accounting for over a third (10/31 = 32%) of such examples de-

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[4] Such accusatives of apparently implicit verbs or particles are attested frequently in the Quran, e.g., in Q4.164–65.

وَرُسُلًا قَد قَصَصنَاهُم عَلَيكَ مِن قَبلُ وَرُسُلًا لَّم نَقْصُصهُم عَلَيكَ وَكَلَّمَ اللّٰهُ مُوسى تَكلِيمًا
رُّسُلًا مُّبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ لِئَلَّا يَكُونَ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَى اللّٰهِ حُجَّةٌ بَعدَ الرُّسُلِ وَكَانَ اللّٰهُ عَزِيزًا حَكِيمًا

‘There are messengers (ACC) whose stories We have told you already and other messengers (ACC) We have not. And to Moses Allah spoke directly. All were messengers (ACC) delivering good news (OBL) and warnings so humanity should have no excuse before Allah after the coming of the messengers. And Allah almighty, all-wise’

There is no explicit verb or particle that triggers the accusative in the two instances of *rusulan* at the beginning of the verses. Presumably, there is an implied *kān* or *ʾinna*.

spite Hand C contributing only 8 percent of the length of the Gospel portions of the MS (7/86 folios). This difference can best be illustrated by comparing the numbers and percentages of accusative forms in accusative versus non-accusative contexts broken down by scribal hand (Tables 18–21).

Table 18: Number of *ʾalif al-tanwīn* in total number of accusative contexts, Hand A

	ʾalif al-tanwīn	**No *ʾalif al-tanwīn***	**Total**
Acc. Contexts	403	14	417
Non-Acc. Contexts	7		
Total	410		

In Hand A, who produced the largest portion of the Gospels in the MS, 98 percent of spellings with *ʾalif al-tanwīn* occur in syntactically accusative contexts, and 97 percent of accusative contexts attest forms spelled with *ʾalif al-tanwīn*.

Table 19: Number of *ʾalif al-tanwīn* in total number of accusative contexts, Hand B

	ʾalif al-tanwīn	**No *ʾalif al-tanwīn***	**Total**
Acc. Contexts	124	5	129
Non-Acc. Contexts	—		
Total	125		

In Hand B, 96 percent of accusative contexts attest inflection with *ʾalif al-tanwīn*, and a full 100 percent of such spellings occur in accusative contexts.

Table 20: Number of *ʾalif al-tanwīn* in total number of accusative contexts, Hand C

	ʾalif al-tanwīn	**No *ʾalif al-tanwīn***	**Total**
Acc. Contexts	34	10	44
Non-Acc. Contexts	—		
Total	34		

In Hand C, 100 percent of spellings with *ʾalif al-tanwīn* occur in accusative contexts, yet only 77 percent of accusative contexts attest eligible forms marked with *ʾalif al-tanwīn*.

Table 21: Number of *ʾalif al-tanwīn* in total number of accusative contexts, Hand D

	ʾalif al-tanwīn	**No *ʾalif al-tanwīn***	**Total**
Acc. Contexts	107	2	109
Non-Acc. Contexts	—		
Total	107		

In Hand D, 98 percent of accusative contexts attest spellings with *ʾalif al-tanwīn*, whether or not explicitly marked with *fatḥatān*, and 100 percent of *ʾalif al-tanwīn* and/or *fatḥatān* spellings occur in accusative contexts.

A minority of instances of case marking—or lack thereof—are interesting and worth discussing. In two places in Hand A sections, diptotes of the *faʿāʾil* and *ʾafāʿīl* broken plural patterns in accusative contexts are spelled with *ʾalif al-tanwīn*.

(141) ولم يخرج هنالك جرايحا كثيره لقله ايمانهم (22v)
w-lm yḫrǧ hnʾlk ǧrʾyḥʾ kṯyrh l-qlh ʾymʾn-hm
'But he did not do any more miracles there among them because of their little faith'

(142) لقد راينا يومنا هذا اعاجيبا (78v)
l-qd rʾynʾ ywm-nʾ hḏʾ ʾʿǧybʾ
'We have seen miracles this day'

Two topics of *lā* as an absolute negator (called in Arabic *lā al-nāfiyah li-l-ǧins* 'the *lā* that negates the genus'), both in portions produced by Hand D, are written as if with different outcomes, and both differ from what becomes the normative pattern, in which the negated noun is in the accusative, but lacks *tanwīn*.

(143) كالبهم التي لا راع لها (13v)
k-ʾl-bhm ʾlty lʾ rʾʿ l-hʾ
'As the livestock who are without a shepherd'

(144) فلا خوفاً عليكما (54v)
f-lʾ ḫwfan ʿly-kmʾ
'Do not be afraid'

In the second, the negated noun *ḫwf* 'fear' is accusative, but marked also with *tanwīn*. In the first example, by contrast, the noun is spelled without the final glide *y*, suggesting a non-accusative realisation, either /rāʿin/, or possibly /rāʿ/ without a final vowel, but presumably not /rāʿiya/. Note that this verse from the Gospel of Matthew (9.36) contrasts with the same verse from the Gospel of Mark (6.34), there in a Hand A section, which has the more prototypical realisation:

(145) لانهم كانوا يسبهون البهم الي لا راعي لها (84v, Hand A)
l-ʾn-hm kʾnwʾ yšbhwn ʾl-bhm ʾlty lʾ rʾʿy l-hʾ
'Because they resembled the livestock who are without a shepherd'

This is one among a number of places where the grammatical sensibilities of the different scribes that produced the tapestry of Vat. Ar. 13 vary. This is also a syntactic context that led to significant variation in the Christian Arabic corpus as well as among the Quranic readers, as we will see further below (§4.0).

1.2. Genitive

Unlike accusatives, which can be seen in all hands due to the consonantal *ʾalif al-tanwīn* spellings, genitive and nominative inflection is marked orthographically by means of short vowel only

on most triptotic nouns. Only Hand D utilises full vocalisations, and is thus the only hand whose sections might attest either. Further, even in MSS in which vocalisations are utilised, and in which the case system is fully in line with the Proto-Arabic one, genitive and nominative are often optionally omitted.[5] For this reason, I have not counted the total number of genitive contexts in Vat. Ar. 13; rather, I have documented the contexts in which genitive marking occurs, noting trends that appear to be relevant.

The genitive is much more frequently marked in Vat. Ar. 13 than the nominative is, a relative ratio that is quite common across MSS, as we will see further below (§4.0). By my count, a word-final *kasra(tān)* occurs 136 times in the portions of the MS composed by Hand D. Of those, 134/136 (99 percent) occur in genitive contexts. The factors that determine whether or not a noun or adjective in the genitive is marked with a *kasra(tān)* are not always clear. However, some factors, both syntactic and morphological, seem to correlate with an increased likelihood of being marked.

First, the syntagm noun + adjective appears to correlate with an increase in explicit case marking in the genitive. In 25/136 cases (18 percent) the syntagm involves nouns that are

[5] This is so common that I consider it to be the norm, rather than the exception, especially in MSS that date as roughly contemporaneous with Vat. Ar. 13. For example, a perusal of Ar. 3315 will show that the nominative and genitive are explicitly written with *ḍammatān* and *kasratān* in a minority of cases; the accusative is regularly indicated consonantally with *ʾalif al-tanwīn*, but *fatḥatān* are similarly used inconsistently.

followed by attributive adjectives. Interestingly, however, the adjective is not always marked, leading to a distribution identical to 'Dialectal *Tanwīn*', i.e., noun-*Vn* + adjective-ø. Note the following examples.

1.2.1. Both Noun + Adjective Marked

(146) كذلك كل شجرةٍ صالحةٍ تثمر ثماراً حسنةً (9r)
k-ḏlk kl šǧrtin ṣʾlḥtin tṯmr ṯmʾran ḥasanatan
'Likewise, every good tree produces good fruit'

(147) هتف يسوع بصوتٍ عالٍ (48r)
htf ysw' b-ṣwtin ʿʾlin
'Jesus shouted with a loud voice'

1.2.2. 'Dialectal *Tanwīn*' Distribution

(148) فلفه في سبايبِ كتَّان خالصٍ نقيّ ودفنهُ في قبرٍ جديدٍ من حجارةٍ منقوره (48v)
f-lf-h fy sbʾybi knnān ḫʾlṣin nqyy w-dfn-h fy qbrin ǧdydin mn ḥǧʾrtin mnqwrh
'And they wrapped him in pure, new linen and buried him in a new tomb in a newly-carved rock'

(149) فانطلق المرأَتين من عند القبر مسرعتينِ بخوفٍ ووجلٍ شديد وفرحٍ وجَذلٍ عظيم (54v)
f-ʾnṭlq ʾl-mrʾtyn mn ʿnd ʾl-qbr msrʿtyni b-ḫwfin w-wǧlin šdyd w-frḥin w-ǧaḏlin ʿẓym
'Then the two women left the grave quickly with great fear and awe, and great joy and enthusiasm'

It is tempting to read these examples circularly, as in line with the pattern of pause in non-poetic Classical texts, where both the case vowel and *tanwīn* are dropped in pause. And indeed, the

places where *kasratān* is missing in the above examples appear to co-occur with a natural break in the flow of the narrative as one might read it aloud. However, there are places that appear to be in pause, but are nevertheless marked with the genitive, as in the following example:

(150) وقالوا لا يحِلّ لنا ان ندخل هذهِ الدراهم خزانهِ الرب لانها ثمن دمٍ فتشاوروُا فيما بينهم فِى ذلك (51v)

w-qʾlwʾ lʾ yḥll l-nʾ ndḫl hḏhi ʾl-drʾhm ḫzʾnti ʾl-rb l-ʾn-hʾ ṯm dmin f-tšʾwrwʾ fy-mʾ byn-hm fiy ḏlk

'And they said, "It is not permissible to deposit these denarii in the Lord's storehouse because it is blood money," so they consulted together on the matter'

The phrase *ṯmn dmin*, lit. 'price of blood', is in the same kind of break in the flow of the narrative that, e.g., *šdyd* in the phrase *wǧlin šdyd w-frḥin* 'and great fear and joy' in example (149) above is, yet it is marked with *kasratān*, whereas *šdyd* is not. We cannot therefore simply conclude that the distribution of *kasratān* merely replicated typical Classical Arabic pausal patterns. Perhaps some interaction with oral performance, possibly related to contemporary spoken Arabic, or at least a previously living one, is at play here.

Second, adverbials consisting of nouns of time + *ʾiḏ* are often, though not always, marked with *kasratān*.

(151) حينيذٍ يصومون (12r)

ḥynyḏin yṣwmwn

'At that time they will fast'

(152) قال لهم يسوع انطلقوا فخرجوا ساعتيدٍ من الرجلين (11v)

qʾl l-hm yswʿ ʾnṭlqwʾ f-ḫrǧwʾ sʾʿtyḏin mn ʾl-rǧlyn

‘Jesus said to them, “Get out!”, and they immediately left the two men’

(153) وكثيرين يقولون لي يوميدٍ (9r)
w-kṯyryn yqwlwn l-y ywmyḏin
‘And many will say to me that day…’

Third, the presence of a 3MSG pronominal suffix is also frequently marked with a *kasrah*, attesting the assimilation of the vowel of the pronominal suffix to the (usually implicit) genitive. In fact, 30 of the 136 examples of genitive marking (22 percent) I have included here are instances of this pronominal suffix assimilation.

(154) فنهض من ساعتهِ فانطلق الي منزلهِ (12r)
f-nhḍ mn sʾʿt-hi f-ʾnṭlq ʾly mnzl-hi
‘Then he got up immediately and went to his house’

(155) كان متكياً مع تلاميذهِ الاثنى عَشر (47r)
kʾn mtkyan mʿ tlʾmyḏ-hi ʾl-ʾṯny ʿašr
‘He was reclining with his twelve disciples’

Perhaps relatedly, other forms of word-final *hāʾ* attract explicit genitive marking. For example, the name Allah, which of course ends in a *hāʾ*, though not of course a 3MSG suffix, is marked when genitive.

(156) اقسم عليك باللهِ الحيّ (52v)
ʾqsm ʿly-k b-ʾllhi ʾl-ḥyy
‘I swear to you by the living God’

(157) الي اليوم الذي اشربه معكم جديدًا في ملكوتِ اللهِ (47v)
ʾly ʾl-ywm ʾlḏy ʾšrb-h mʿ-km ǧdydan fy mlkwti ʾllhi
‘Until the day I drink it [wine] with you anew in the kingdom of God’

(158) نَجّ نفسك من الموتِ ان كنت للهِ ابناً (49v)
naǧǧ nfs-k mn ʾl-mwti ʾn knt l-lhi ʾbnan
'Save yourself from death if you are the son of God'

And nouns that end in a *tāʾ marbūṭah*, likewise correlate with higher rates of genitive marking (23/136 – 17%).

(159) ثمّ ان القطيع باسرهِ رقا فوق هضبهٍ (11v)
ṯmm ʾn ʾl-qṭyʿ b-ʾsrhi rqʾ fwq hḍbtin
'Then the whole herd went up onto the hill'

(160) وَكما اقول لكم في الظُلمهِ قولوه انتم في النُورِ (14v)
wa-kmʾ ʾqwl l-km fy ʾl-ẓulmti qwlw-h ʾntm fy ʾl-nuwri
'And what I say to you in the darkness, you all say in the light'

(161) فدنت من هُدُبِ ردايهِ (13r)
f-dnt mn hudubi rdʾy-hi
'So he drew near to the edge of his cloak'

While *kasra(tān)* is almost always written in a genitive context, in two instances a *kasrah* is marked word-finally on a noun that does not stand in a genitive context. In the first example, the noun, which ends in a *tāʾ marbūṭah*, is marked with a *kasrah* despite being a direct object.

(162) وقالوا الا يحِلّ لنا ان ندخل هذهِ الدراهم خزانهِ الرب (51v)
w-qʾlwʾ ʾlʾ yḥill l-nʾ ʾn ndḫl hḏhi ʾl-drʾhm ḫzʾnti ʾl-rb
'And they said, "It is not permitted to deposit these denarii in the storehouse of the Lord"'

Perhaps the scribe assumed the presence of a preposition and pointed as genitive without adding the preposition. Otherwise, as we will see, there are numerous parallels in other vocalised Christian MSS in which nouns ending in *tāʾ marbūṭah* are pointed with

a *kasra(tān)*, regardless of syntax. The other example is syntactically nominative.

(163) وسيسلم الاخ اخاهُ للموتِ والابِ ابنهُ (14v)
w-syslm ʾl-ʾḫ ʾḫʾ-hu l-l-mwti w-ʾl-ʾbi ʾbn-hu
'And brother will give up his brother to death, and the father his son'

Two possible explanations present themselves to explain this usage of the *kasrah*. Either there was a lapse due to the preceding genitive of the noun *mwt* 'death', or perhaps the *kasrah* here is not a case vowel, but rather is a prothetic vowel anticipating the noun *ʾbn* 'son', which typically begins with *hamzat al-waṣl*, e.g., something like *wa-l-ʾabi bn(a)-hu*.

1.3. Nominative

The nominative case is explicitly marked only a handful of times in the sections produced by Hand D. It is in fact quite common for the nominative to be least frequently marked of the three cases (Stokes 2023a, 290–91). There are by my count only 13 examples of *ḍamma(tān)*, all of which occur in nominative syntactic contexts. The syntactic distributions of *ḍamma(tān)* are listed in Table 22.

Table 22: Nominative inflection by syntax

Syntactic Context	Instances
Topic of Nominal Sentence	1
Predicate of Nominal Sentence	2
Topic of Existential Sentence w/ *kāna*	2
Topic of Negative Existential Sentence w/ *laysa*	1
Subject of Active Verb	4
Subject of Passive Verb	3

In several cases, the marking of *tanwīn* again follows a 'Dialectal *Tanwīn*'-like distribution.

(164) فكان هدوٌ عظيم (11r)
f-kʾn hdwun ʿẓym
'And there was a great calm'

(165) وكان هنان نسوةٌ كثير واقفات ينظرن من بعيدٍ (48v)
w-kʾn hnʾk nswtun kṯyr wʾqfʾt ynẓrn mn bʿydin
'And there were many women standing and watching from far off'

This includes not only noun + adjective syntagms, but also noun + prepositional phrase ones as well. Nouns with explicit nominative marking often seem to correlate with a relatively high degree of specificity, translatable as 'a certain…'. The following examples illustrate this.

(166) فقال رهطٌ من الكتبهِ (11v)
f-qʾl rhṭun mn ʾl-ktbti
'And a certain group of the scribes said […]'

(167) اتي قومٌ من اوليك الشرطه الي المدينه (54v)
ʾty qwmun mn ʾwlyk ʾl-šrṭh ʾly ʾl-mdynh
'A certain group of those guards came to the city'

Elsewhere, the function of the noun marked with the nominative is similar to the adverb of specificity (Arabic *tamyīz*), but is in the nominative instead:

(168) وَجعلوُا يقولونَ له وَاحدٌ فَواحدٌ لعلِّي انا هُوَ يا سيّديْ (47r)
wa-ǧʿluwʾ yqwlwna l-h wāḥidun fa-wʾḥdun l-ʿlliy ʾnʾ huwa yʾ syyd-yø

> 'And they started saying to him one by one, "Am I him, master?"'[6]

Finally, of the topics of nominal sentences and subjects of verbal sentences, those marked with *tanwīn* tend to be backed, thus occurring farther from the predicates than in unmarked sentences.

(169) هل تجني من الشوك عنبٌ او من الغيل تينٌ (9r)
hl tǧny mn ʾl-šwk ʿnbun ʾw mn ʾl-ġyl tynun
'Can a grape be picked from a thistle bush? Or a fig from a thicket?'

(170) وتحت يدي خدامٌ (10r)
w-tḥt ydy ḫdʾmun
'And there are servants under my command'

As we will see below (§4.0), each of these categories has parallels in other MSS.

1.4. 'The Five Nouns' (*al-ʾasmāʾ al-ḫamsah*)

A further manifestation of triptotic nominal case inflection involves five nouns on which morpho-syntactic case is realised via a long vowel, spelled *plene*, when in construct. These nouns—*ʾab* 'father', *ʾaḫ* 'brother', *fum* 'mouth', *ḥam* 'father-in-law', and the

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[6] The nominative instead of accusative here is attested in Classical texts, such as the introduction to Ibn Ḫālawayh's *Kitāb al-Badīʿ* (pg. 4).

وأجعل الحروف الشاذّة في الحواشي مخرجة باسم واحد فواحد

wa-ʾaǧʿalu l-ḥurūfa l-šāḏḏata fī l-ḥawāšī muḫriǧatan bi-smin wāḥidun fa-wāḥidun

'I have put the rare variants in the margins, citing it by name [as opposed to single-letter *sigla*] one by one'

I thank Marijn van Putten for this reference.

determinative *ḏū* 'the one of/with'—are referred to together as 'the Five Nouns' (Arabic *al-ʾasmāʾ al-ḫamsah*). The evidence from these spellings thus provides insight into nominal case inflection even in a manuscript that is otherwise unvocalised. There are 96 occurrences of eligible forms in the Gospel portions of Vat. Ar. 13. The data on their inflection and syntax is detailed in Table 23.

Table 23: Inflectional forms by syntactic contexts, whole MS

	Nom. Form	**Gen. Form**	**Acc. Form**	**Totals**
Nom. Context	18	—	1	19
Gen. Context	—	48	—	48
Acc. Context	1	—	28	29
Totals	19	48	29	96

In keeping with the trend from other triptotic inflectional categories already discussed, the majority of instances of these nouns inflect as expected based on the case system reconstructible for Proto-Arabic, and, in the case of 'the Five Nouns', as is attested in the Quran as well as the *ʿArabiyyah*. In the Gospels of Vat. Ar. 13, 95 percent of nominative forms occur in nominative contexts; 100 percent of genitive forms occur in genitive contexts; 97 percent of accusative forms occur in accusative contexts. Contextually it is the same, with 95 percent of nominative contexts attesting a nominative form, 100 percent of genitive contexts attesting a genitive form, and 97 percent of accusative contexts attesting a genitive form.

The only two examples of non-normative case inflection both occur in the initial portion of the Gospel of Matthew, which was produced by Hand C.

(171) ومن ساعتهم تركوا السفينه وابوهما ولحقاه (3v)
w-mn sʿt-hm trkwʾ ʾl-sfynh w-ʾbw-hmʾ w-lḥqʾ-h
'And they immediately left the boat and their father and followed him'

As one of only two instances of atypical inflection, it is hard to determine what to make of this, though a generalised nominative is possible.[7] In the second example, the subordinating conjunction *kamā* 'as, just as', immediately precedes the noun *ʾab* 'father' in the accusative.

(172) كونوا الان انتم كاملين كما اباكم الدى في السما كامل (5v)
kwnwʾ ʾl-ʾn ʾntm kʾmlyn kmʾ ʾbʾ-km ʾldy fy ʾl-smʾ kʾml
'Now, be perfect, just as your father in Heaven is perfect'

We might assume an implicit *ʾanna* was part of the phrase intended by the scribe, thereby triggering the accusative.

1.5. Final Glides + Pronominal Suffixes (*ʾasmāʾ mamdūdah*)

In the Quran, and consequently in Classical orthography, nouns ending in *-*ā*ʾ with a pronominal suffix are spelled with a glide between the root and the suffix corresponding to nominal case: *ǧazāʾu-hū* 'his penalty (NOM)' would be spelled جزاوه, the genitive

[7] Interestingly, in other early Arabic Gospel MSS from the same milieu, atypical inflection occurs at the same place. For example, the MSS in Kashouh's Family A (2012, 86–96), including SAr. MS 72, SAr. MS 74, and Vat. Borg. Ar. 95, each of which dates to either the 9th or 10th centuries CE, all attest the genitive ابيهما in this context.

would be spelled جزايه, and the accusative would be spelled جزاه.[8] These nouns are referred to in Arabic as *ʾasmāʾ mamdūdah* 'lengthened nouns', because they end in an *ʾalif mamdūdah*, a term which the grammarians reserved for those nouns that ended in *-*āʾ* that contrasted with forms that ended in *-ā*, regardless of whether the latter was spelled with ى or ا, both of which spellings the grammarians referred to as *ʾalif maqṣūrah* (Van Putten 2026). In Vat. Ar. 13, the combination of final **āʾ* + pronominal suffix is, with one exception, consistently spelled with a glide homorganic with the underlying vowel. In almost every instance, the glide corresponds to the prototypical case based on the syntax. The data are presented in Table 24.

Table 24: Inflectional Forms in Syntactic Contexts, whole MS

	Nom. Form	**Gen. Form**	**Acc. Form**	**Totals**
Nom. Context	35	—	—	35
Gen. Context	—	50	1	51
Acc. Context	3	—	14	17
Totals	38	50	15	103

[8] This is consistent and ubiquitous in the Cairo Edition of the Quran, but, as Van Putten (2022, 286–87, §A.4.11) notes, both spellings with and without the glides are attested in the earliest Quranic manuscripts. He interprets this general pattern as indicating a situation in which the glottal stop had been optionally retained in these roots, and spellings with the glides reflect the absence of the glottal stop, whereas spellings that lack the glides reflect its retention (287). By the time of the composition of Vat. Ar. 13, by which time the orthographic norms could very well have changed, it is not clear whether the glottal stop had been retained here, or whether glide spellings would represent the diphthongs /āw/ and /āy/.

Across all hands, 92 percent of nominative forms occur in nominative contexts, 100 percent of genitive forms occur in genitive contexts, and 93 percent of accusative forms occur in accusative contexts. The regular spelling of glides, and their very consistent correspondence with the pattern we would expect based on the system reconstructed for Proto-Arabic, suggests either the retention of the glottal stop and the presence of short case vowels, or, if the glottal stop was not realised, a corresponding diphthong/monophthong: nominative *āʾu* or *āw*, genitive *āʾi* or *āy*, and accusative *āʾa* or *ā*.

The three instances of nominative forms in accusative contexts occur in portions of the text that were copied by the earliest two hands (twice in Hand A and once in Hand B). The two examples produced by Hand A have similar wording.

(173) وجعل يسل ارباوه في الطريق ويقول لهم (59v)
w-ǧʿl ysl ʾrbʾw-h fy ʾl-ṭryq w-yqwl l-hum
'And he started asking his disciples along the way and saying to them...'

(174) وجعل يعلم ارباوه ويقول لهم (62r)
w-ǧʿl yʿlm ʾrbʾw-h w-yqwl l-hm
'And he started teaching his disciplines and saying to them...'

In the one example from Hand B, while the context makes clear that the noun should be the direct object, it is possible to read it otherwise.

(175) فيجمع نجياوه من اربع ارواح العالم (70r)
f-yǧmʿ nǧyʾw-h mn ʾrbʿ ʾrwʾḥ ʾl-ʿʾlm
'And he will gather his elect from the four winds of the earth'

While the actor is clearly the son of man/Jesus, the scribe perhaps read فيجمع as a passive verb with the subject, 'his elect', in the nominative. The final example from Hand C is less clear because it is spelled without a glide.

(176) دلك الذي لست باهل ان انزع شسع حداه (3r)
ḏlk ʾlḏy lst b-ʾhl ʾn ʾnzʿ šsʿ hdʾ-h
'The one before whom I am unworthy to stoop down to untie the laces of his sandals'

The accusative spelling, which reflects no glide, is actually unmarked in terms of case, so it is not certain that this represents an example of accusative inflection rather than a glide-less spelling, *á la* the Quran. As noted above (n. 8), most early Quranic MSS attest combinations of glide and glide-less spellings; the ubiquity of glide spellings is a characteristic of the Cairo Edition (Van Putten 2022, §A.4.11). If the spelling was not intended to reflect a glide, however, it is, as far as I can tell, the only example in the text of the Gospels in Vat. Ar. 13.

1.6. The Noun *bVdʾ* 'beginning'

Five instances of a form of the noun **bVdʾ*[9] 'beginning' occur spelled with a glide, either بدوا / بدو or بدي. However, if the underlying form were indeed /badʾV/, we would not expect a glide spelling. The spellings would rather suggest either the loss of a post-consonantal glottal stop in this form, resulting in underlying /bVduw(w)/ and /bVdiy(y)/, or perhaps, if the glottal stop were retained, some kind of metathesis with the case vowel, i.e., **bVdʾu* > **bVduʾ* and **bVdʾi* > **bVdiʾ*. In favour of the assumption that the glide corresponds to case inflection is the fact that spellings with both *w* and *y* occur, the latter in genitive context:

(177) موسى انما اذن لكم ان تطلقوا نساكم لقساوت قلوبكم فاما من البدي فليس هكذا كان (31r)

mwsy ʾnmʾ ʾḏn l-km ʾn tṭlqwʾ nsʾ-km l-qsʾwh qlwb-km f-ʾmʾ mn ʾl-bdy f-lys hkḏʾ kʾn

'Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because of the hardness of your hearts, but it was not this way from the beginning'

Each of the other four instances, however, are spelled with a *w*, despite the fact that none is in a nominative context (they are three genitive and one accusative contexts, respectively).

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[9] Lane (1863, 163.3) cites by-forms with *a*-, *i*-, and *u*-class vowels. Since none of the forms is vocalised, I have left the initial vowel quality unspecified.

(178) فاما من البدوا فانما خلقهما الله ذكرا واشى (63v)
f-ʾmʾ mn ʾl-bdwʾ f-ʾnmʾ ḫlq-hmʾ ʾllh ḏkrʾ w-ʾnṯy
'But from the beginning God created them male and female'

(179) لم يكن مثله من بدو الخليقه (70r)
lm ykn mṯl-h mn bdw ʾl-ḫlyqh
'There has not been one like it since the beginning of creation'

(180) دعى ياهبتاه السين ان يشبعوا بدوا (57v)
dʿy yʾ hbtʾh ʾl-bnyn ʾn yšbʿwʾ bdwʾ
'Let (FSG) the sons get their fill first'

As we have already seen, triptotic case inflection in Vat. Ar. 13 is very close to that reconstructed for Proto-Arabic, and the system attested in, e.g., the Quranic consonantal text. This might reflect a generalised nominative form, and its presence in direct speech contexts may mean we are dealing with another intentionally vernacular expression. This seems especially likely in the case of the final example, where the noun appears to function adverbially; cf. modern dialectal *ʾawwal* 'firstly' instead of formal *ʾawwalan*.

To summarise the evidence from triptotic case marking on singular and broken plural nouns, the majority of the evidence corresponds with a case system essentially identical to the one reconstructible for Proto-Arabic. We will have space to compare and contrast the evidence from Vat. Ar. 13 with other corpora, pre- and early Islamic, in §4.0 below. Before contextualising the data for the nominal case inflection, however, we must first examine dual and sound masculine plural inflection.

2.0. Dual Case Inflection

Dual case inflection occurs on nouns and adjectives and inflects for two cases: nominative and oblique, the latter occurring in genitive and accusative syntactic contexts. The inflection for the nominative of nouns and adjectives is *-*āni*, spelled in consonantal texts ان-, and the oblique inflection is *-*ayni*, spelled in consonantal texts ين-. A total of 171 dual nominal forms occur in Vat. Ar. 13. The distribution of the forms and the syntactic contexts in which they occur are provided in Table 25.

Table 25: Dual inflectional forms and their syntactic contexts, whole MS

	Nom. Form	Obl. Form	Totals
Nom. Context	36	4	40
Obl. Context	10	121	131
Totals	46	125	171

Correlating forms and contexts, 78 percent of nominative forms occur in nominative contexts, and 97 percent of oblique forms occur in oblique contexts. Fully half of the nominative forms that occur in oblique contexts involve the numeral ‘two’, whether on its own or as a part of the compound number ‘twelve’, which is common in references to the twelve apostles. Each of these occurs in sections produced by Hand B.

(181) خرج الي بيت عنيا مع اربابه الاثنا عشر (66v)
ḫrǧ ʾly byt ʿnyʾ mʿ ʾrbʾb-h ʾl-ʾṯnʾ ʿšr
‘He went to Bethany with his twelve disciples’

(182) ثم ان يهوذا السخريوطي احد الاثنا عشر انطلق الي عظما الكهنه (71r)
ṯm ʾn yhwḏʾ ʾl-sḫrywṭy ʾḥd ʾl-ʾṯnʾ ʿšr ʾnṭlq ʾly ʿẓmʾ ʾl-khnh
‘Then Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went out to the chief priests’

A pair of examples nicely illustrates the tendency of **iṯnān* to be nominative, regardless of syntax, even when dual inflection otherwise occurs as expected. In sections copied by Hand A, it occurs in the first of parallel verses—Matt. 19.6 and Mark 10.8—as the predicate of *laysa*, but in the nominative. In the verse from Mark 10, however, the oblique is attested on the noun *nās*.

(183) فليسا الان اثنان بل انما هما جسدا واحدا (31r)
f-lysʾ ʾl-ʾn ʾṯnʾn bl ʾnmʾ hmʾ ǧsdʾ wʾḥdʾ
'So they (DU) are no longer two, but rather they are one flesh'

(184) وبكونان كلاهما جسدا واحدا فليس هما الان ناسين بل هما جسد واحد (63v)
w-ykwnʾn klʾ-hmʾ ǧsdʾ wʾḥdʾ f-lys hmʾ ʾl-ʾn nʾsyn bl hmʾ ǧsd wʾḥd
'Then they will be together one body, and they are no longer two people, but they are one body'

It is possible that *iṯnān*, especially as a part of the common compound 'twelve', was generalised in the nominative and intentionally used because of its familiarity, even though the scribes were able to inflect the dual otherwise as expected. This is attested in other corpora, as we will see below (§4.0).

Conversely, one of the four examples of oblique forms in nominative contexts involves the compound 'twelve' referring to the twelve disciples, which occurs in a portion composed by Hand D.

(185) فاما الاربآ الاثنى عشر فهذه اسماوهم (13v)
f-ʾmʾ ʾl-ʾrbāʾ ʾl-ʾṯny ʿšr f-hḏh ʾsmʾw-hm
'And as for the twelve disciples, these were their names...'

These differences, which pattern by hand, suggest different grammars that the scribes felt free to employ even when copying from an underlying text that exhibited a different grammar.

3.0. Sound Masculine Plural Case Inflection

Adjectives and other substantives that have the option of pluralisation by means of the MPL suffix inflect for two cases: nominative *-*ūna*, spelled ون-, and oblique *-*īna*, spelled ين-. A total of 267 instances of sound MPLs, almost all of them adjectives, occur in the Gospel portions of Vat. Ar. 13. The distribution of inflectional forms and the syntactic contexts in which they occur is presented in Table 26.

Table 26: Sound MPL inflectional forms and their syntactic contexts, whole MS

	Nom. Form	**Obl. Form**	**Totals**
Nom. Context	107	9	116
Obl. Context	1	149	150
Totals	108	158	266

As can be seen from these data, sound MPL morphology in Vat. Ar. 13 is overwhelmingly in line with the system as reconstructed for Proto-Arabic. Approximately 99 percent of nominative forms occur in nominative contexts, and 94 percent of oblique forms occur in oblique contexts. Unlike with dual inflection, non-prototypical inflection typically consists of oblique forms in nominative contexts. The lone example of a nominative form in an oblique context occurs on a noun that is a direct object in a coordinated clause far removed from the verbal predicate.

(186) وقربوا اليه جميع المدنقين بالامراص المختلفه والمعذبون بانواع العداب (4r)
w-qrbwʾ ʾly-h ǧmyʿ ʾl-mdnqyn b-ʾl-ʾmrʾḍ ʾl-mḫtlfh w-ʾl-mʿḏbwn b-ʾnwʾʿ ʾl-ʿḏʾb
'And they brought to him all of those afflicted with different illnesses and those suffering from different ailments'

The tendency for nominative marking distant from the topic of the nominal sentence, or from the verbal predicate in a verbal one, might be in evidence also in sentences in which the first noun is inflected atypically in the oblique, but the second one as expected in the nominative.

(187) فاما الحصادين فهم الملايكه المقربون (21v)
f-ʾmʾ ʾl-ḥṣʾdyn f-hm ʾl-mlʾykh ʾl-mqrbwn
'As for the harvesters, they are the companion angels'

(188) كان معهم عماه ومقعدين وخرس وشل واخرون بهم اوجاع مختلفة (25v)
kʾn mʿ-hm ʿmʾh w-mqʿdyn w-ḫrs w-šl w-ʾḫrwn b-hm ʾwǧʾʿ mḫtlfh
'And with them there were the invalid and the mute and the lame and others who were ailing with different ailments'

The latter example might reflect an interpretation of the first *wa-* in the verse as a *wāw al-maʿiyyah*, which triggers the accusative (Fischer 2002, 175–76, §328b), whereas the second *wa-* introduces a separate, coordinated group, i.e., 'And with them there were invalid with the mute and lame, as well as others who were ailing with different ailments'. Otherwise, both might be examples of the shift to nominative the farther removed the noun gets

from the head or subordinating particle (on which, see §4.0 below).

Of the nine oblique forms in nominative contexts, two nouns recur: *muqʿadīn* 'invalid, lame' and *ʿaššārīn* 'tax collectors'. Yet another, *ḥaṣṣādīn* 'harvesters', occurs only once but is similarly a noun that describes a group that was common in society, and might have been familiar enough to be intentionally used in the one form—a generalised oblique—that would be familiar to the audience. We saw above that 'two' and 'twelve' often inflect differently from other dual nouns, though, in that scenario, a different MPL case—the oblique, rather than the nominative—was generalised.

4.0. Comparison with Other Corpora

The basis of comparison here is, first and foremost, the system reconstructed for Proto-Arabic. While what becomes normative Classical Arabic more or less preserves this, the *ʿArabiyyah* tradition, as well as the Quranic *qirāʾāt*, are not homogeneous. Indeed, especially regarding the alternation of accusative and nominative, aspects of non-prototypical case inflection in Vat. Ar. 13 are paralleled in either the *ʿArabiyyah* or the Quranic *qirāʾāt* or both. As is to be expected, significant parallels occur in the early Islamic-era papyri, and especially the other early Christian MSS. Unfortunately, most aspects of the case system as attested in the early papyri are only impressionistically described. However, published quantitative data are available for one feature in the early papyri, namely *al-ʾasmāʾ al-ḫamsah* (Kootstra 2022), and quantitative data for all aspects in several early Christian Arabic

MSS are recently published (Stokes 2023a; 2023b). I have further complemented this data with data from two early theological treatises, one preserved in SAr. 154 (referred to here, following Swanson 2014, as *Apology*) dating to the late 8th or early 9th century (Swanson 2014, 40–42), and the other (referred to here, following Griffith 1992 [1986], as *Summa Theologiae Arabica*) preserved in BL 4950 dating to 867 (or 877) CE (Griffith 1992 [1986], 117–38). The MSS referred to below include the following (in approximate order of date of composition).

Table 27: List of MSS

MS Shelf Mark	**MS Abbreviation**	**Contents and Date of Composition**
Sinai Arabic MS. 154	SAr. 154	Theological treatise *Apology*, late 8th/early 9th CE
British Library MS. 4950	BL 4950	Theological treatise *Summa Theologiae Arabica*, 867/877 CE
Sinai Arabic MS. 74	SAr. 74	Gospels, 9th CE
Sinai Arabic MS. 72	SAr. 72	Gospels, 897 CE
Sinai Arabic MS. 54	SAr. 54	Gospels, 9th/10th CE
Vatican Borg. Arabic MS. 95	Vat. Borg. Ar. 95	Gospels, 9th CE
Sinai Arabic MS. 71	SAr. 71	Gospels, 10th CE
Sinai Arabic MS. 70	SAr. 70	Gospels, 10th CE
Sinai Arabic MS. 75	SAr. 75	Gospels and theological treatise *Burhān*, 10th CE
Sinai Arabic MS. 106	SAr. 106	Gospels, 1056 CE
Sinai Arabic MS. 69	SAr. 69	Gospels, 1065 CE
Vatican Borg. Arabic MS. 71	Vat. Borg. Ar. 71	Gospels, 11th CE
Sinai Arabic MS. 112	SAr. 112	Gospels, 1259 CE
Sinai Arabic MS. 90	SAr. 90	Gospels, 1289 CE
Sinai Arabic MS. 89	SAr. 89	Gospels, 1285 CE
Sinai Arabic MS. 76	SAr. 76	Gospels, 13th CE

I have included Gospel MSS from the 9th to 13th centuries CE in order to help contextualise not only the earliest scribal hands attested in Vat. Ar. 13, likely dating to the late 9th or early 10th century CE, but also Hand D, which is more fully vocalised and possibly dates to the 12th or 13th century CE.

We begin by contextualising the data for the distribution of the *ʾalif al-tanwīn* within this larger group of MSS. Rather than repeating every detail, I have opted instead to focus on the distribution by looking at two categories of data. The first category in Table 28 (below), "*ʾalif al-tanwīn* in Acc. Contexts," reflects the number and percentage of nominal forms with *ʾalif al-tanwīn* that occur in accusative contexts. This gives a sense of how frequently nouns (and adjectives) written with *ʾalif al-tanwīn* occur in accusative versus non-accusative syntactic roles. The second category is the number and percentage of accusative contexts in which an eligible (indefinite, triptotic, not ending in a *tāʾ marbūṭah*) noun or adjective occurs and in which the noun or adjective is marked with *ʾalif al-tanwīn*. These two categories are not the same, and indeed the respective percentages in many early MSS differ. Even if a majority of nouns with *ʾalif al-tanwīn* occur in accusative contexts, it is still possible for only a small number and percentage of accusative contexts to attest forms spelled with *ʾalif al-tanwīn*. For example, if nine of ten forms with *ʾalif al-tanwīn* occur in accusative contexts, that is 90 percent in the first category. However, if only ten of 200 accusative contexts attest a form with *ʾalif al-tanwīn*, then that is only 5 percent in the second category of the same MS.

Table 28: *ʾAlif al-tanwīn* spellings and accusative contexts in early Arabic Gospel MSS[10]

MS	***ʾalif al-tanwīn* in acc. contexts**	**Acc. contexts w/ *ʾalif al-tanwīn***
SAr. 154 (late 8th/early 9th CE)	53/72 (74%)	53/116 (46%)
SAr. 74 (9th CE)	133/139 (96%)	133/280 (48%)
BL 4950 (867/877 CE)	123/131 (94%)	123/191 (64%)
SAr. 72 (897 CE)	180/188 (95%)	180/336 (54%)
SAr. 70 (10th CE)	183/201 (91%)	184/236 (78%)
SAr. 75 (10th CE)	475/584 (81%)	475/617 (77%)
SAr. 106 (1056 CE)	225/237 (95%)	225/305 (74%)
SAr. 76 (13th CE)	431/475 (91%)	377/431 (88%)
Vat. Ar. 13	651/661 (99%)	661/677 (98%)

The two categories reveal different patterns, especially in most early Christian MSS. On the one hand, *ʾalif al-tanwīn* was overwhelmingly used to mark nouns in syntactically accusative roles. Vat. Ar. 13 fits this trend, although, at 99 percent, it has the highest ratio of *ʾalif al-tanwīn* spellings to accusative syntactic function of any Christian MS heretofore studied. Still, several other early MSS attest ratios of over 90 percent. On the other hand, the number of accusative contexts in which an eligible noun occurs and is marked with *ʾalif al-tanwīn* is typically much lower. In other words, while *ʾalif al-tanwīn* was mostly used, as, e.g., in the Quran, to mark accusatives, the overall number of accusatives marked was mixed, with some MSS marking less than half. In this regard, Vat. Ar. 13—with nearly ubiquitous marking of eligible accusative nouns with *ʾalif al-tanwīn*—is noteworthy compared with Christian MSS produced in the 9th and 10th centuries CE.

[10] The data on SAr. 74, SAr. 72, SAr. 70, SAr. 75, SAr. 106, and SAr. 76 are taken from Stokes (2023a, 264). The data for SAr. 154 and BL 4950 are based on my tallies directly from the MSS.

All early Christian MSS studied heretofore spell a minority of nouns in non-accusative contexts with *ʾalif al-tanwīn*. As we see in Table 29, the contexts in which non-accusative spellings with *ʾalif al-tanwīn* occur in Vat. Ar. 13 are the same as in other Christian MSS. However, Vat. Ar. 13 stands out in having many fewer examples of these, in terms of both raw number of occurrences and overall percentage of *ʾalif al-tanwīn* spellings.

Table 29: Number/Percentage of nominal forms with *ʾalif al-tanwīn* in non-accusative contexts[11]

MS	***ʾalif al-tanwīn* to mark non-standard roles**
SAr. 154 (late 8th / early 9th CE)	19/72 (26%)
SAr. 74 (9th CE)	6/139 (4.3%)
BL 4950 (867/877 CE)	8/131 (6%)
SAr. 72 (897 CE)	8/188 (4.3%)
SAr. 70 (10th CE)	8/201 (4%)
SAr. 75 (10th CE)	109/584 (19%)
SAr. 106 (1056 CE)	12/237 (5%)
SAr. 76 (13th CE)	44/475 (9%)
Vat. Ar. 13	7/661 (1.1%)

As we can see, a figure of only seven such spellings out of 661 forms with *ʾalif al-tanwīn* stands in contrast to other MSS, in which nearly that number occur with only a fraction of the total number of eligible nouns counted. Most of these are either subjects of passive verbs (2/7), predicates of nominal clauses (2/7), and the word *ʾaḥad* (2/7). These are, however, the main contexts

[11] The data for SAr. 74, SAr. 72, SAr. 70, SAr. 75, SAr. 106, and SAr. 76 are taken from Stokes (2023a: 292–296); the data for SAr. 154 and BL 4950 are based on my tallies directly from the MSS.

in which parallels are amply found in other early corpora, including especially early Christian MSS, and this pattern became even more frequent in later, vocalised MSS (Stokes 2023a, 291–306, §3.4). Examples of nominal predicates spelled with *ʾalif al-tanwīn* in the early MSS include the following.

(189) فان قال لكما شيا فقولوا ان الرب اليها محتاجا (SAr. 74, 45r)
f-ʾn qʾl l-kmʾ šyʾ f-qwlwʾ ʾn ʾl-rb ʾly-hʾ mḥtʾǧʾ
‘And if anyone says anything to you, then say that the Lord has need of it’

(190) وان كان ليس باهل فلسلامكم راجعا اليكم (SAr. 70, 12v)
w-ʾn kʾn lys b-ʾhl f-slʾm-km rʾǧʿ ʾly-km
‘And if they [the people] are not worthy, then your greeting will come back to you’

(191) الفاعل لطعامه مستوجبا (SAr. 70, 12v)
mstwǧbʾ ʾl-fʾʿl l-ṭʿm-h
‘The worker has earned his food’

(192) المالح طيبا فان ذهب طعم الملح فبماذا يُملح (SAr. 75, 40v)
ʾl-mlḥ ṭybʾ f-ʾn ḏhb ṭʿm ʾl-mlḥ f-bmʾḏʾ yumlḥ
‘The salt is tasty, but if the taste of the salt goes, how can it be made salty again?’

(193) والشاهد على ان الله الكلمه بلحمه الاها واحدا ولحما واحدا (BL 4950, 27r)
w-ʾl-šʾhd ʿly ʾn ʾllh ʾl-klmh b-lḥm-h ʾlʾhʾ wʾḥdʾ w-lḥmʾ wʾḥdʾ
‘And the witness to the fact that God is the word in its flesh, one God and one flesh…’

(194) فاحب الله ان يخزي ابليس وان يجعله ضعيفا وبين للناس انه عبدا عاصيا ضعيفا (SAr. 154, 107r)
f-ʾḥb ʾllh ʾn yḫzy ʾblys w-ʾn yǧʿl-h ḍʿyfʾ w-byn l-l-nʾs ʾn-h ʿbdʾ ʿṣyʾ ḍʿyfʾ

‘So God desired to disgrace the devil and make him weak, and make clear to humanity that he was but a rebellious and weak slave’

Further, the noun *ʾaḥad* ‘someone’, along with *wāḥid* ‘idem’, is often marked with *ʾalif al-tanwīn* in these MSS, regardless of syntax.

(195) لا يريد ان يومن به احدا كرها (SAr. 154, 122r)
lʾ yryd ʾn ywmn b-h ʾḥdʾ krhʾ
‘He does not want anyone to believe in him by force’

(196) قالوا له لانه لم يستاجرنا احدا (SAr. 72, 24r)
qʾlwʾ l-h l-ʾn-h lm ystʾğr-nʾ ʾḥdʾ
‘And they said to him, “Because no one has hired us”’

(197) يا مُعلم امر ناموس انه ان مات احدا وليس له بنين (SAr. 70, 27r)
yʾ muʿlm ʾmr nʾmws ʾn-h ʾn mʾt ʾḥdʾ w-lys l-h bnyn
‘Teacher, the Torah commands that, if a man dies and does not have children...’

(198) وقال لواحدًا منهم (SAr. 80, 34v)
w-qʾl l-wʾḥdan mn-hm
‘And he said to one of them...’

A related phenomenon, wherein **šayʾ* ‘something’, is spelled with *ʾalif al-tanwīn* regardless of syntax.

(199) لا يعجزه شيا اراده (SAr. 154, 107r)
lʾ yʿğz-h šyʾ ʾrʾd-h
‘Nothing he desires is impossible for him’

The parallels include also subjects of intransitive and passive verbs.

(200) ثم قال لهم ماذا يحل في السبت ان يُعمل خيرا ام شرا (SAr. 75, 32v)
ṯm qʾl l-hm mʾḏʾ yḥl fy ʾl-sbt ʾn yuʿml ḫyrʾ ʾm šrʾ
'Then he said to them, "What is permissible to be done on the Sabbath? Good or evil?"'

(201) حينيذ تم قول ارميا النبي الذي قال صوتا سُمع في الرامه بكا ونوحا كثيرا (SAr. 75, 3v)
ḥynyḏ tm qwl ʾrmyʾ ʾl-nby ʾlḏy qʾl ṣwtʾ sumʿ fy ʾl-rʾmh bkʾ w-nwḥʾ kṯyrʾ
'Then the proclamation of Jeremiah was fulfilled, who said, "A voice is heard in Ramah, much crying and weeping"'

(202) قد دنا انطفاوه لا يطفى وسراجا (SAr. 69, 20v)
w-srʾǧʾ qd dnʾ ʾnṭfʾw-h lʾ yṭfy
'A lamp soon to be extinguished is not put out'

In each case, the earliest MSS had only one method for indicating *tanwīn* on such nouns, namely the *ʾalif al-tanwīn*. Once vowel markings for marking *kasratān* and *ḍammatān* proliferated, there theoretically existed three means for indicating *tanwīn*. On the other hand, vocalised Gospel MSS increasingly made use of *tanwīn*, mainly *kasratān*, to mark these same functions, regardless of context, and tended to use *ʾalif al-tanwīn* only to mark prototypical accusatives (see also further below).

In addition to the numerous parallels with other early Christian MSS, several places in Vat. Ar. 13 with *ʾalif al-tanwīn* and/or *fatḥatān* spellings in places that are, from the perspective of later normative Classical Arabic non-standard, reflect variation that is attested in the *ʿArabiyyah* and/or the *qirāʾāt*. For example, as we saw above, two instances of diptotic broken plural patterns—جرايحا 'signs (ACC)' and اعاجيبا 'miracles (ACC)'—were

spelled with *ʾalif al-tanwīn*, in defiance of Classical spelling practice. The spellings of diptotes in Classical orthography was based on Quranic/Ḥiǧāzī spelling conventions, in which diptotes in the accusative are usually spelled without the *ʾalif al-tanwīn*, i.e., جرايح or اعاجيب.[12] Yet, the Quran actually attests the spellings of accusatives with *ʾalif al-tanwīn*, in pausal position, mostly in a single Surah, Q33: الظنونا /aẓ-ẓunūnā/ 'the assumptions' (Q33.10), الرسولا /ar-rasūlā/ 'the messenger' (Q33.66), and السبيلا /as-sabīlā/ 'the way' (Q33.67). To be sure, such spellings are not the norm in the Quran; in fact, they are mostly confined to one Surah al-ʾAḥzāb. Nevertheless, such long spelling was clearly an option, which, whatever the phonetic realisation of the accusative Hand A intended (whether *-an* or *-ā*), the scribe felt free to use in some contexts.

Another example of such features that fit within a broader picture of early *ʿArabiyyah* is the variation in the realisation of case and *tanwīn* after *lā* as an absolute negator, i.e., as *lā li-nāfiyat al-ǧins* 'the *lā* that negates the category'. For example, we saw that Hand D marks a noun in one clause as accusative with *tanwīn*, but another in the nominative without *tanwīn*. In fact, several inflectional types—nominative and accusative with *tanwīn*—are attested in, e.g., the Quranic *qirāʾāt*. Indeed, the

[12] Van Putten and Stokes (2018, 161–63) argue that this spelling was due originally to the loss of final short vowels, which led diptotes such as *ǧarāʾiḥ* and *ʾaʿāǧīb* to be unmarked when word-final: **ǧarāyiḥu/a* > **ǧarāyiḥ*. The occurrence of diptotes spelled with *ʾalif al-tanwīn* would then reflect register or dialect different from the one in which the majority of the Quran was delivered, perhaps for purposes of rhyme.

Quranic readers regularly differ from each other over the inflection of both the case and presence/absence of *tanwīn* in clauses negated with *lā*. Incidentally, in the common Quranic phrase لا خوف عليكم (Q43.68), or the near parallel لا خوف عليهم (Q10.62), most readers recite this in the nominative with *tanwīn*, i.e., *lā ḫawfun ʿalaykum / ʿalayhim* 'there is no fear for you'; however, according to both his transmitters, the reader Yaʿqūb recited it in the accusative and without *tanwīn*, i.e., *lā ḫawfa ʿalaykum / ʿalayhum*.[13] While there are no exact parallels to the example above in which *ḫawf* is in the accusative with *tanwīn* among the canonical readers, there is a non-canonical reading tradition in which such inflection does occur. Al-Ḥasan Al-Baṣrī (d. 110 AH/728 CE), the famous Basran grammarian and Quranic reader (though not canonical), read the phrase ذلك الكتاب لا ريب فيه 'that book, there is no doubt in it' (Q2.2) exactly as in Vat. Ar. 13, with accusative and *tanwīn*: *lā rayban fī-hi* (Mufradat Al-Ḥasan Al-Baṣrī, pg. 210).[14] Whatever one thinks about his reading, it is difficult to argue that Al-Baṣrī would read such forms based on ignorance of good Arabic grammar!

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[13] It is possible that this represents a difference in interpretation, e.g., that those who read it *lā ḫawfun* do so because a specific fear—of judgment—is being negated, rather than all kinds of *ḫawf*. The 3MPL pronominal suffix after *-ay* in Yaʿqūb's reading is the Ḥiǧāzī form that lacks vowel assimilation, *ʿalayhum*, rather than *ʿalayhim*.

[14] I thank Marijn van Putten for this reference. See also Van Putten and Sidky (f.c.) for more on Al-Ḥasan Al-Baṣrī and a discussion of the variants attested in his reading tradition in the context of para-Uthmanic Quranic textual traditions.

Still, one might argue that inter-reader differences cannot fully explain the intra-scribal hand variation from Hand D in Vat. Ar. 13, where forms with and without *tanwīn* are attested following *lā*. In fact, though, the same Quranic reader often inflected nouns in the same syntactic context differently, even in the same verse. The clearest example of this is in Q2.197,[15] where the nouns *rafaṯ* 'intimate relations', *fusūq* 'foul language', and *ǧidāl* 'disagreement' are each negated by *lā*, but in several reading traditions, such as those of Ibn Kaṯīr and ʾAbū ʿAmr, the first two nouns are inflected in the nominative with *tanwīn*, whereas the third is accusative without it: *fa-lā rafaṯun wa-lā fusūqun wa-lā ǧidāla fī l-ḥaǧǧ* 'there is no intimate relations, nor foul language, nor arguing during the pilgrimage [to Mecca]'. According to Ibn Ḫālawayh (d. 370 AH/980 CE), the reason for the nominative/*tanwīn* of the first two is that the *lā* is functioning as *laysa* with regard to these two nouns, rather than as the absolute negation *lā*, but not with the final noun *ǧidāl* (Al-Ḥuǧǧah, 94). Though this seems a bit strained, it is nevertheless possible that semantic considerations did play a role. One could argue that such variation should not surprise, since virtually all Quranic readers read Q2.2 as *lā rayba*, but all instances of لا خوف as *lā ḫawfun*, while conversely, the same reader—Al-Ḥasan Al-Baṣrī—who reads *lā rayban fī-hi* in Q2.2 reads *lā ḫawfa ʿalayhim* at Q2.38 (Mufradat Al-Ḥasan Al-Baṣrī, pp. 210, 214)!

This is important data and context to consider when analysing inflectional differences in early Arabic MSS. It seems that

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[15] The relevant portion in consonantal script reads: الحج أشهر معلومت فمن فرض فيهن الحج فلا رفث ولا فسوق ولا جدال في الحج.

often semantic considerations played at least some role in inflectional patterns following *lā*. Returning to the two examples from Hand D, in the first, كالبهم التي لا راع لها 'as cattle among the wolves', it is perhaps significant that the negated *lā* clause occurs as a part of a syndetic relative clause, thereby modifying a specific subset of livestock, namely those without a shepherd. Such specificity might have been felt to be too narrow for *lā* to carry the negation of a whole *ǧins* 'category'. In the end, while there were presumably reasons that the scribe chose different inflections for the two different attested forms, it is often difficult to recover them.

Both *ḍammatān* and *kasratān* are attested in Hand D, the lone significantly vocalised portion of Vat. Ar. 13, primarily to mark nominative and genitive, respectively. As we saw, *kasratān* is used with significantly higher frequency—at 136 to 13, about ten times more frequently—than *ḍammatān*. This follows a common pattern across many MSS (Stokes 2023a, 289–90; 2023b, §§4.2.2–3). In Vat. Ar. 13, with two exceptions, every instance of *kasratān* occurs in a genitive context, and each instance of *ḍammatān* occurs in a nominative one. This is another place where the grammar of Hand D differs from that in other vocalised Christian MSS, as can be seen in Table 30.

Table 30: Number and percentage of *ḍamma(tān)* and *kasra(tān)* spellings that occur in expected contexts[16]

	SAr. 89 (1285 CE)	**SAr. 90 (1281 CE)**	**SAr. 112 (1259 CE)**	**SAr. 76 (13th CE)**	**Vat. Ar. 13 Hand D (12th CE)**
***ḍamma(tān)* in Nom. Contexts**	1/1 (100%)	2/3 (67%)	6/6 (100%)	14/19 (74%)	13/13 (100%)
***kasra(tān)* in Gen. Contexts**	63/96 (66%)	33/57 (58%)	98/129 (76%)	103/156 (66%)	134/136 (99%)

While *ḍammatān* is fairly commonly restricted to nominative contexts in the Arabic Gospel MS corpora, *kasratān* is frequently used to mark many of the syntactic functions, and the same set of words, as in earlier MSS marked with *ʾalif al-tanwīn*.

(203) او مالي سلطانٍ ان افعل بمالي ما اشا (SAr. 112, 31r)
ʾw mʾ l-y slṭʾnin ʾn ʾfʿl b-mʾl-y mʾ ʾšʾ
‘Or do I not have authority to do with my money what I wish?’

(204) وليس احدٍ صالح الا الله الواحد (SAr. 89, 31r)
w-lys ʾḥdin ṣʾlḥ ʾlʾ ʾllh ʾl-wʾḥd
‘There is no one righteous except God alone (or: the one God)’

(205) حينيدٍ تم ما قالهُ ارميا النبي القايل صوتٍ سمع في الرامه (SAr. 82, 9r)
ḥynydin tm mʾ qʾl-hu ʾrmyʾ ʾl-qʾyl ṣwtin smʿ fy ʾl-rʾmh
‘Then what the prophet Jeremiah said was fulfilled, who said “A voice is heard in Ramtha”’

In the same MSS, *kasratān* is especially common in this usage when orthography would forbid the use of *ʾalif al-tanwīn*, such as

[16] The data for SAr. 89, SAr 90, SAr. 112, and SAr. 76 are taken from Stokes (2023a, 296–304).

when the noun ends in *tāʾ marbūṭah* or is an *ism mamdūd* (i.e., ending in *-āʾ).

(206) ايها المعلّم الصالح اي صلاح اعمله لتحصل لي حياهٍ ابديّه (SAr. 84, 36r)
ʾyhʾ ʾl-mʿllm ʾl-ṣʾlḥ ʾy ṣlʾḥ ʾʿml-h l-tḥṣl l-y ḥyʾtin ʾbdyyh
'Oh, righteous teacher, what good thing must I do to obtain everlasting life?'

(207) ليس تستطيع شجرةٍ صالحه تثمر ثمر سو (SAr. 91, 7r)
lys tstṭyʿ šǧrtin ṣʾlḥh tṯmr ṯmr swʾ
'A good tree cannot produce bad fruit'

(208) ليس لكم في اللهِ محبةٍ (Leiden Or. 561, 127v)
lys l-km fy ʾllhi mḥbtin
'You do not have the love of God'

While this interchange of *fatḥah* and *kasrah* is extremely rare in Vat. Ar. 13, the fact that words ending in *tāʾ marbūṭah* make up a significant percent of the nouns that get explicit *kasra(tān)* marking might nevertheless be related.

It was noted above that, in many instances, especially with *kasratān*, the distribution of *tanwīn* in Hand D is similar to that of 'dialectal *tanwīn*', in which a noun is marked with *tanwīn* but a following adjective is not, or where a noun is more likely to be marked when followed by an attributive prepositional phrase or verbal clause (Blau 1999, 167–212; Stokes 2020b). This distribution occurs rarely in the early Arabic Gospel MSS, but becomes very common in later, vocalised ones. Note that this 'dialectal *tanwīn*' distribution occurs regardless of whether or not the case is prototypical from the standpoint of Proto-Arabic or not.

(209) الشعب الجالس في الظلمه نظر نورًا عظيما (SAr. 112, 5v)
ʾl-šʿb ʾl-ǧʾls fy ʾl-ẓlmh nẓr nwran ʿẓymʾ
‘The people sitting in darkness has seen a great light’

(210) واذا رجلً ابرص قد سجد له قايلا (Vat. Borg. Ar. 71, 12r)
w-ʾḏʾ rǧlan ʾbrṣ qd sǧd l-h qʾylʾ
‘And a leprous man bowed before him, saying...’

(211) وفي طريقٍ أُحري مضوا الي بلدهم (SAr. 112, 3v)
w-fy ṭryqin ʾuḫry mḍwʾ ʾly bld-hm
‘And they went to their country by a different way’

(212) كذلك كُل كذلك كُل شخرةٍ صالحه تصنع ثمرةٍ طيبه (SAr. 82, 16v)
k-ḏlk kul šǧrtin ṣʾlḥh tṣnʿ ṯmrtin ṭybh
‘Likewise, every righteous tree produces righteous fruit’

(213) قال المسيح الزارع ربٌ وفيّ (Leiden Or. 561, 18r)
qʾl ʾl-msyḥ ʾl-zʾrʿ rbun wfyy
‘The Messiah said, “The sower is a faithful Lord”’

This feature is amply documented, not just in Christian corpora, but also in medieval Judaeo-Arabic and Muslim compositions as well (Stokes 2020b; 2021, 638–39).

Vat. Ar. 13 is thus similar to many other MSS, Christian and otherwise (including those considered Classical), in that the frequency of case-related vocalisations is: *ʾalif al-tanwīn* > *kasratān* > *ḍammatān*. In terms of the distribution of *kasratān* especially, it likewise patterns with other corpora in the ‘dialectal *tanwīn*’-like distribution of these vocalisations. Compared with the other Gospel MSS for which we have detailed data, however, it is relatively more conservative in terms of the distribution of case, with *kasratān* rarely (if indeed ever) used to mark non-genitive functions. The case system as it manifests on singular triptotic nouns is thus very similar to what is reconstructible for Proto-Arabic,

and the system—including the variation—attested in the Quranic *qirāʾāt* and *ʿArabiyyah*.

In the category of *al-ʾasmāʾ al-ḫamsah* inflection, the data from Vat. Ar. 13 once again on the whole shows more archaic patterns than that in other early MSS and papyri, although, as Table 31 shows, this conservatism is mainly remarkable when all three cases are taken together. Several other MSS attest conservative realisations of, e.g., nominative inflection (BL 4950 and SAr. 70, both early MSS), or accusative (Vat. Borg. Ar. 71 and the corpus of early Arabic papyri). Typically, MSS or corpora will attest one or two inflectional categories that are quite conservative and one that is less so. In general, most forms that are atypical from the standpoint of Proto-Arabic case are nominative forms in non-nominative contexts (for the early Arabic papyri, see Kootstra 2022, 390–91; for the Arabic Gospel MSS, see Stokes 2023b, 11–12). One of the two examples in Vat. Ar. 13 involves a nominative form in a syntactically accusative context.

Table 31: Number and percentage of forms of the 'Five Nouns' that occur in expected contexts[17]

MS	**Nom.**	**Gen.**	**Acc.**
Early Arabic Papyri (7th–9th CE)	130/252 (52%)	502/508 (99%)	58/65 (89%)
SAr. 154 (late 8th/early 9th CE)	1/4 (25%)	2/2 (100%)	1/2 (50%)
BL 4950 (867/877 CE)	3/3 (100%)	24/25 (96%)	4/8 (50%)
SAr. 72 (897 CE)	10/13 (77%)	15/20 (75%)	9/17 (53%)
SAr. 70 (10th CE)	10/10 (100%)	17/24 (71%)	14/20 (70%)

[17] The data for SAr. 72, SAr. 70, Vat. Borg. Ar. 71, and SAr. 76 are from Stokes (2023b, 9–15); the data for the early Arabic papyri are taken from Kootstra (2022, 391); the data for BL 4950 and SAr. 154 are based on my tallies of these features directly from the MSS.

MS	Nom	Gen	Acc
SAr. 69 (1065 CE)	4/7 (57%)	15/19 (79%)	10/13 (77%)
Vat. Borg. Ar. 71 (11th CE)	10/12 (83%)	22/22 (100%)	20/20 (100%)
SAr. 76 (13th CE)	10/11 (91%)	20/20 (100%)	16/19 (84%)
Vat. Ar. 13	18/19 (95%)	48/48 (100%)	28/29 (97%)

When it comes to spellings of *al-ʾasmāʾ al-mamdūdah*, nouns that end in world-final *-*āʾ*, we have already seen that classically these nouns are spelled with a homorganic glide that matches the quality of the case vowel, when followed by a pronominal suffix.[18] The accusative spelling is indistinguishable in consonantal spelling from a glide-less spelling, and could theoretically be unmarked for case, as is in early Quranic MSS. In Vat. Ar. 13, only one possible instance of such an unmarked spelling occurs, with the other two non-prototypical spellings being the nominative form in accusative contexts. In the other early Christian MSS for which we have data, however, these unmarked/glide-less spellings were more common. In most instances where an explicitly nominative or genitive spelling does not occur in the MSS listed in Table 32, the spelling is glide-less.

[18] In the Quranic consonantal text, final **āʾu* was occasionally spelled with a combination of *ʾalif* + glide when the noun is in construct with a following noun. For a list of the spellings and their locations, as well as a discussion of the implications for the underlying phonetic realisations of these instances, see Van Putten (2022, 245–48).

Table 32: Number and percentage of final glide forms that occur in expected contexts[19]

MS	Nom. Form in Nom. Context	Gen. Form in Gen. Context	Acc. Form in Acc. Context
SAr. 154 (late 8th/early 9th CE)	1/5 (20%)	7/13 (54%)	—
BL 4950 (867/877 CE)	0/4	7/20 (35%)	—
SAr. 72 (897 CE)	0/1	4/6 (67%)	2/2 (100%)
SAr. 70 (10th CE)	0/1	11/12 (92%)	4/4 (100%)
SAr. 69 (1065 CE)	2/3 (67%)	7/12 (58%)	3/3 (100%)
Vat. Borg. Ar. 71 (11th CE)	1/3 (33%)	6/10 (60%)	1/1 (100%)
SAr. 76 (13th CE)	1/1 (100%)	8/9 (89%)	3/3 (100%)
Vat. Ar. 13	35/35 (100%)	50/51 (98%)	14/17 (82%)

Of the earliest Christian MSS, Vat. Ar. 13 is by far the most Classical in its orthographic representation of the cases, and its case system is the closest, as far as we can tell, to that of Proto-Arabic. Still, it is not qualitatively unique. In the *Summa Theologiae Arabica* of BL 4950, for example, nominative and genitive spellings with and without the corresponding glides occur.

(214) لان بعض الاشيا المختلفه جوهرها قد تتفق اسماوها (BL 4950, 22v)
l-ʾn bʿḍ ʾl-ʾšyʾ ʾl-mḫtlfh ǧwhr-hʾ qd ttfq ʾsmʾw-hʾ
‘Because the names of some of the things that differ in terms of their nature are nevertheless shared’

but

(215) حق ايمانه الذى جات به الحوارييين رسُل الله وانبياه (BL 4950, 3v)
ḥq ʾymʾn-h ʾlḏy ǧʾt b-h ʾl-ḥwʾryyn rsul ʾllh w-ʾnbyʾ-h
‘The truth of his faith, which the disciples, messengers of God, and his prophets brought’

[19] The data for SAr. 72, SAr. 70, SAr. 69, Vat. Borg. Ar. 71, and SAr. 76 are taken from Stokes (2023b, 5–25); the data for SAr. 154 and BL 4950 are based on my own tallies directly from the MSS.

and

(216) ولذلك عاد الي سمايه (BL 4950, 9r)
w-l-ḏlk ʿʾd ʾly smʾy-h
'And because of that, he returned to his heavens'

but

(217) فقالوا ليسنا نرجمك علي الاعمال الحسنه ولكن علي افتراك (BL 4950, 16r)
f-qʾlwʾ lys-nʾ nrğm-k ʿly ʾl-ʾʿmʾl ʾl-ḥsnh w-lkn ʿly ʾftrʾ-k
'And they said, "We will not stone you because of good deeds, but rather because of your blasphemy"'

The *Apology* in SAr. 154, perhaps the earliest Christian text so far known, attests a genitive/non-genitive distinction when it comes to spellings, with ا and اي both occurring in genitive contexts, but only the glide-less form in nominative contexts.

(218) على السنه انبيايه (SAr. 154, 114r)
ʿly ʾlsnh ʾnbyʾy-h
'By the mouths (lit. tongues) of his prophets'

and

(219) على السنه انبياه (SAr. 154, 124r)
ʿly ʾlsnh ʾnbyʾ-h
'…of his prophets'

but

(220) وانبياه يرغبون اليه (SAr. 154, 106r)
w-ʾnbyʾ-h yrġbwn ʾly-h
'And his prophets beseech him'

This is reminiscent of the Damascus Psalm Fragment, in which remnants of the genitive are attested on a few nouns in the genitive when followed by pronominal suffixes (Al-Jallad 2020a, 22).

(221) βη αυθάνιὺμ [bi-ʔaṯwāni-hum] 'with their graven images' (v. 58); Classical *bi-ʾawṯāni-him*

(222) βη μενχουτέτηὺμ [bi-menḥūtēti-hum] 'with their high places' (v. 58); Classical *bi-manḥūtāti-him*

(223) μιθλ αβαιὺμ [miṯl ʔābāy(i)-hum] 'like their fathers' (v. 57); Classical *miṯla ʾābāʾi-him*

This may therefore suggest that, in the variety behind SAr. 154, a partial case system—genitive/non-genitive—was retained in non-word-final position. Evidence for a more robust sort of partial case system is perhaps reflected in the distribution of spellings in the Quranic consonantal text, where only accusative was retained in word-final position, but full inflection in non-word-final position (Van Putten and Stokes 2018). It is worth noting here that Van Putten has argued that the *hamzah* was lost in most phonetic contexts, but, based on the evidence from rhyme, as well as these spellings, was occasionally retained on *al-ʾasmāʾ al-mamdūdah* when non-word final (Van Putten and Stokes 2018; Van Putten 2022, 120–22, §5.2; 286–87, §A.4.11).

Finally, in some early Gospel MSS, such as SAr. 72 and SAr. 74, the spelling اي occurs with nouns in genitive and nominative position, but not accusative.

(224) فابنايكم بماذا يخرجوهم (SAr. 72, 15r)
f-ʾbnʾy-km b-mʾḏʾ yḫrǧw-hm
'And your sons, by what [power] do they exorcise them [demons]?'

(225) وتقولون لو كنا فى ايام ابائنا لم نكن شراكايهم (SAr. 71, 2r)
w-tqwlwn lw knʾ fy ʾyʾm ʾbʾy-nʾ lm nkn šrʾkʾy-hm
'And you say, "If we had been alive in the days of our forefathers, then we would not have been their partners"'

(226) وعظمايهم قد يتسلطون عليهم (Vat. Borg. Ar. 71, 35r)
w-ʿẓmʾy-hm qd ytslṭwn ʿly-hm
'And their rulers lord over them'

Blau (1966–1967, 89, §11.3.6.1) notes such spellings occasionally across the early Christian Arabic corpus. Stokes (2023b, 17–25) argues against the default assumption that these were hypercorrections, proposing several alternative possibilities. One is that it might reflect the use of the digraph اي to indicate the presence of a non-word-initial glottal stop, contrasting with glide-less ا spellings (on the evidence for this usage outside of the Christian MSS discussed here, see Al-Jallad 2021). It is possible that the glide spelling reflects the loss of the glottal stop in this position, but even in the other early MSS, this is far from certain. We might speculate that high vowels merged, either **u,*i* > *ə* or *i*, so that an accusative non-accusative binary emerged: *ə/i* versus *a*, the former of which was spelled with the ي glide.[20] However, it is relevant to note that spellings with اي in nominative contexts across the MSS occur only with heavy suffixes, i.e., CVC. This is, in fact, the only place where they occur in the Damascus Psalm

[20] The shift is well attested among, e.g., modern Arabic dialects. In some cases, *i* is the default realisation of the historical high vowels, as in, e.g., Najdi Arabic (Ingham 2008, 328, §2.1.3). The merger of historical high vowels to *ə* is also well-known, as in the Jewish dialect of Baghdad (Mansour 2006, 234, §2.2.2.2).

Fragment. We could perhaps interpret the *i*-vowel insertion here as merely epenthetic, rather than reflecting a retained case vowel: **āʾhum / *āʾkum > āʾihum / āʾikum*. If so, then the evidence from glide/glide-less spellings for case retention on *ʾasmāʾ mamdūdah* suggests a cline, from full retention, as in Vat. Ar. 13, to partial inflection, as in SAr. 154 and perhaps BL 4950, to total loss, or at most accusative versus non-accusative, as perhaps in the other early Gospel MSS.

Before moving to dual and MPL inflection, it is worth briefly contextualising the inflection of *bVdʾ* 'beginning', as attested in Vat. Ar. 13 by the spellings with glides, with other early MSS that attest the same form. A comparison with those MSS for which we have reliable quantitative data is as follows.

Table 33: Number and percentage of *bVdʾ* spellings that occur in expected contexts[21]

MS	**Nom. Forms in Nom. Contexts**	**Gen. Forms in Gen. Contexts**
SAr. 74 (9th CE)	2/2 (100%)	4/4 (100%)
SAr. 72 (897 CE)	2/2 (100%)	4/4 (100%)
SAr. 70 (10th)	1/1 (100%)	2/2 (100%)
SAr. 71 (10th CE)	3/3 (100%)	2/2 (100%)
SAr. 75 10th CE)	—	3/3 (100%)
Vat. Ar. 13	—	1/5 (20%)

The data are somewhat surprising. Of the early Gospel MSS in which some form of *bVdʾ* is attested, the inflection in Vat. Ar. 13 is the least conservative, mostly attesting a generalised nomina-

[21] The data for SAr. 74, SAr. 72, SAr. 70, SAr. 71, and SAr. 75 are taken from Stokes (2023b, 27).

tive form. It is possible that the word was perceived as more formal, thus triggering a more conservative inflectional pattern among the scribes that produced the other Gospel MSS, whereas, in Vat. Ar. 13, it is mainly in direct speech, and perhaps was felt to be less formal. If so, it may point to a different provenance, or different sociolinguistic context for the Ur-text of the Gospel attested in Vat. Ar. 13. This is speculative, of course, but the contrast between the other triptotic inflectional patterns in Vat. Ar. 13, which are very conservative, and that of *bVdʾ* is striking.

The inflection of the dual and sound MPL in the early corpora for which we have quantitative data contrast with the patterns of triptotic case inflection primarily in that, especially in the early MSS, the nominative forms are relatively rare in any context, whereas the oblique occurs in most contexts. Compared with other MSS, the dual in Vat. Ar. 13 is consistently more conservatively inflected, though a significant increase in typical inflection patterns (as classified from the standpoint of the Proto-Arabic case system) can be seen in MSS from the 11th and following centuries CE. The data for dual forms and their syntactic distribution are provided in Table 34.

Table 34: Number and percentage of dual forms that occur in expected contexts[22]

MS	Nom. Forms in Nom. Contexts	Obl. Forms in Obl. Contexts
SAr. 154 (late 8th/early 9th CE)	0/5	25/28 (89%)
SAr. 74 (9th CE)	3/16 (19%)	21/28 (75%)
BL4950 (867/877 CE)	2/11 (18%)	30/31 (97%)
SAr. 72 (897 CE)	3/27 (11%)	40/46 (87%)
SAr. 70 (10th CE)	4/16 (25%)	48/56 (86%)
SAr. 75 (10th CE)	10/35 (29%)	90/115 (78%)
SAr. 69 (1065 CE)	13/19 (68%)	42/46 (91%)
SAr. 76 (13th CE)	15/18 (83%)	50/52 (96%)
Vat. Ar. 13	36/40 (90%)	121/131 (92%)

As we saw above (§2.0), many of the nominative forms in oblique contexts consist of the number 'two' or the compound 'twelve'. It is tempting to see behind such instances a broader trend of a single dual form generalised in the vernacular. Al-Jallad (2020a, 68) has suggested that such a colloquialism stands behind the (in)famous Quranic phrase in ان هذن لسحرن, which the majority of canonical Quranic readers interpret as *ʾinna hāḏāni la-sāḥirāni*, 'Indeed, these two are sorcerers!' (Q20.63). The nominative here would be ungrammatical in the *ʿArabiyyah* grammatical tradition, with the oblique form expected instead. More recently, however, Van Putten (2023c) has argued in favour of an original reading *ʾin hāḏāni la-sāḥirāni*, with *ʾin al-muḫaffafah* 'lightened *ʾin*'. If true, since the 'lightened *ʾin*' does not trigger the accusative, it does not constitute evidence of a generalised nominative

[22] The data for each MS is based on my tallies directly from the MSS for the purpose of this study.

dual in the Quran. Whatever the case may be, the generalisation of a single form of the word 'twelve', either the historical nominative or oblique, is a common feature of Christian translations of the Gospels. In most Gospel MSS, including the earliest datable texts, the nominative form of 'twelve' is generalised, despite the fact that the oblique seems to have been generalised everywhere else.

(227) فلما كان المسا كان متكي مع تلاميده الاثنا عشر (SAr. 74, 58v)
f-lmʾ kʾn ʾl-msʾ kʾn mtky mʿ tlʾmyḏ-h ʾl-ʾṯnʾ ʿšr
'Then when it was evening, he was reclining with his twelve disciples'

(228) تدينوا اثنا عشر سبط اسرايل (SAr. 72, 24r)
tdynwʾ ʾṯnʾ ʿšr sbṭ ʾsrʾyl
'You will judge the twelve tribes of Israel'

(229) فلما تم ايسوع وصيته للاثنا عشر تلميذ (SAr. 106, 19r)
f-lmʾ tm ʾyswʿ wṣyt-h l-l-ʾṯnʾ ʿšr tlmyḏ
'Then when Jesus had finished giving his command to the twelve disciples...'

In some later Gospel MSS, however, the opposite occurred, with the oblique form generalised, as in Hand D. As with Hand D, in these later MSS, dual inflection is often otherwise in accordance with the system as attested in the *ʿArabiyyah*.

(230) وانتوي عيسى ان يلم بالبيت المقدس ومعه الاثني عشر حواريا (Leiden Or. 561, 15th CE, 27v)
w-ʾntwy ʿysy ʾn ylm b-ʾl-byt ʾl-mqds w-mʿ-h ʾl-ʾṯny ʿšr ḥwʾryʾ
'And Jesus decided to go to the temple, and the twelve disciples were with him'

Dual inflection of 'twelve' appears to be one area where different scribal hands attest different grammars. This perhaps reflects intentional usage of a colloquial form due to the frequency and familiarity of the term 'the twelve (disciples)'. The same kind of generalisation of one form to all contexts is also attested in the MPL in some MSS, as we will see directly.

As with dual inflection, Vat. Ar. 13 is characterised by a very conservative inflection of the MPL. Unfortunately, there are no published quantitative data available for MPL inflection in any MS of which I am aware. The data in Table 35 is based on my own tallies of this feature in a few early MS.

Table 35: Number and percentage of sound MPL forms that occur in expected contexts[23]

MS	Nom.	Obl.
SAr. 154 (late 8th/early 9th CE)	4/6 (25%)	68/79 (86%)
BL 4950 (867/977 CE)	2/38 (5%)	60/60 (100%)
SAr. 72 (897 CE)	4/41 (10%)	95/96 (99%)
Vat. Ar. 13	107/116 (92%)	149/150 (99%)

In Vat. Ar. 13, all but one oblique context attests an oblique form. The one counterexample involves coordination of several nouns, the last of which is in the nominative. Examples of the shift from oblique to nominative with increased distance or coordination occur in other corpora, including the *ʿArabiyyah*. For example, returning to the topic of absolute negation with *lā*: if *lā* immediately precedes the negated noun, it is typically in the accusative and lacks *tanwīn*; if, conversely, anything intercedes between the

[23] The data for each MS in this table are based on my own tallies directly from the MSS.

two constituents, such as a prepositional phrase, the negated is in the nominative and has *tanwīn* (Wright 1896, II:68–69), e.g., لا غَولَ فيها *lā ġawl-**a** fī-hā* 'there is no injurious force in her', but لا فيها غَولٌ *lā fī-hā ġawl-**un*** 'idem'.[24]

Oblique forms occurring in nominative contexts is the norm in the other MSS consulted as part of this study. In SAr. 154, in fact, the only nominative form that occurs is the word for 'disciples', *ḥawāriyyūn*, which is always nominative. However, the word for 'Jews', *banī ʾisrāʾīl*, is always oblique, regardless of syntax. Conversely, in BL 4950, the form for 'disciples' is always oblique, i.e., *ḥawāriyyīn*. We have already seen this phenomenon with the compound phrase 'the twelve', referring to the disciples, in Vat. Ar. 13 and other MSS as well. It seems likely, therefore, that the few examples of recurring oblique forms in nominative contexts that we encounter in Vat. Ar. 13 are likewise terms that have been generalised in contemporary spoken Arabic and presumably were intentionally used due to their familiarity and ubiquity.

Despite the relative dearth of data for the sound MPL compared with other categories, we nevertheless see an intriguing distinction between triptotic case inflection—manifested in the accusative, the 'five nouns', *ʾalif mamdūdah*, and *bVdʾ* inflection—on the one hand, and diptotic dual and MPL inflection, on the other. While significant variation occurs in the former, there is

[24] A similar trend is attested in the domain of verbal mood, wherein a tendency to revert to indicative forms in non-indicative contexts distant from the subordinating particle is said to have been quite widespread. On this practice, see Ch. 6, §3.0.

very little in the latter in the 9th- and 10th-century MSS; the rise in inflection of the dual and sound MPL lags behind singular triptotic categories by over a century. One possible interpretation of this trend is that the Quranic and *ʿArabiyyah* system of nominal case inflection on triptotic nouns was more salient earlier on, and perhaps specifically more saliently associated with written registers and higher formality, than were the dual and MPL categories. One reason for this in general could be the relative rarity of the latter two categories compared with the former. Another factor could be the significance of triptotic inflection in the traditions behind the *ʿArabiyyah*, which were likely becoming more associated with the register of Quranic recitation, in addition to other kinds of linguistic sophistication and performance (see again, Al-Jallad 2020a, 69–72). Whatever the reason, it is another piece of evidence cautioning against the assumption that all aspects of nominal case inflection were regarded as equally important, and perhaps equally prestigious, or even indeed part of a singular system or register. In any event, Vat. Ar. 13 is not just more conservative/archaic in its nominal case inflection than other early Arabic Gospel MSS, perhaps the more remarkable aspect of it in this regard is the degree to which dual and sound MPL inflection was as conservative/archaic as singular triptotic inflection.

CHAPTER 6. MORPHOSYNTAX: VERBAL MOOD

The Proto-Arabic verbal system inherited a set of modal inflections on the imperfective/prefix conjugation from Proto-Central Semitic that distinguished three moods: indicative, volitive, and jussive/apocopate (Huehnergard 2005, 164–65). The morphological inflection was distinguished on most singular forms by short vowels (indicative *-u*, volitive *-a*) or the absence of a vowel (jussive/apocopate). With the 2FSG and MPL forms, there was a two-way distinction between indicative and non-indicative, indicated by the presence of a suffix *-na* (indicative) or its absence -ø (volitive and jussive). The primary innovation of Arabic to this system is the subjunctive use of the volitive marked on singular forms with *-a*, which is primarily triggered syntactically whenever an imperfect is subordinate to another verb or particle (Al-Jallad 2018a, 319).

This system in the *ʿArabiyyah* is largely determined syntactically, with the following particles and contexts triggering either the subjunctive or jussive.

> ***Subjunctive-triggering Particles***: subordinating *ʾan*, future negator *lan*, intentive or purposive *li-*
>
> ***Jussive-triggering Particles and Contexts***: *lam(mā)* past tense negator; *(fa)-li* expressing indirect commands; wishes; protasis and/or apodosis of conditionals

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There are further verb-like particles, often (though not always) followed by the nominaliser *ʾan*, that can be used to express various epistemic nuances, such as *ʿasā* 'perhaps', etc. (Fischer 2002, 109–10, §196). The system of morpho-syntactic mood inflection of the strong verb reconstructible to Proto-Arabic, and which will serve as the point of departure and basis for comparison, is given in Table 36 (spellings according to Quranic/Ḥiǧāzī orthography).

Table 36: Reconstructed morpho-syntactic inflection of Proto-Arabic modal system, strong roots

Mood	3MSG	2FSG	3MPL
Indicative	يقتل *yaqtul-u*	تقتلين *taqtulī-na*	يقتلون *yaqtulū-na*
Subjunctive	يقتل *yaqtul-a*	تقتلي *taqtulī-ø*	يقتلوا *yaqtulū-ø*
Jussive	يقتل *yaqtul-ø*		

In addition to 'strong verbs', another category, predictably called 'weak verbs', comprises a number of root types, including II = III (i.e., geminate) roots, as well as roots with glides in one or more positions of the verb root. For our purposes the important ones to note are II-*Y/W* and III-*Y/W* roots, i.e., those with glides in the second or third position of the verb root. Due to Proto-Semitic sound laws, the following reductions in vowel length occurred $*CV_1Y/WC\# > CV_1C\#$ and $CV_1Y/W\# > CV_1\#$ (for detailed discussions and proposed developments of these sequences from Proto-Semitic through their manifestations in various Proto-Central Semitic languages, see Suchard 2016 on II-*Y/W* roots and Suchard 2017 on III-*Y/W* ones). These changes resulted in jussive/apocopate forms manifested with short vowels, and classically spelled short: *yakun* (instead of ***yakūnø*) / *yabni* (instead of ***yabnī*). The changes are likewise responsible for the short

realisation of the vowel of 2MSG imperative forms, which are likewise classically spelled short: *kun* (instead of ***kūn*) and *(V)bni* (instead of ***(V)bnī*). The paradigm for Proto-Arabic, with spellings in Quranic/Ḥiǧāzī orthography, is shown in Tables 37–38.

Table 37: Reconstructed morpho-syntactic inflection of Proto-Arabic modal system, II-*Y/W* and III-*Y/W* roots (prefix conjugation)

Mood	**3MSG**	**2FSG**	**3MPL**
Indicative	يكون *yakūnu*	تكونين *takūnīna*	يكونون *yakūnūna*
	يبني *yabnī*	تبنين *tabnīna*	يبنون *yabnūna*
Subjunctive	يكون *yakūna*		
	يبني *yabniya*	تكوني *takūnī*	يكونوا *yakūnū*
Jussive	يكن *yakun*[1]	تبني *tabnī*	يبنوا *yabnū*
	يبن *yabni*		

[1] In both the Quranic consonantal text and the *qaṣīdah* poetic corpus, there is another form of this verb specifically, written in the Quranic consonantal text يك and recited as /yaku/ in both the *qirāʾāt* and the *qaṣīdah* poetry. For an argument that the realisation underlying the language of the Quranic consonantal text was /yak(u)/, the result of a set of changes that are reconstructible as **yakun* > **yaku* > **yak*, see Van Putten and Stokes (2018, 168–70). This form does not occur in the Gospels of Vat. Ar. 13, or indeed any portions of the MS, as far as I am aware, nor does it occur in the other early Christian MSS consulted for this study.

Table 38: Reconstructed morpho-syntactic inflection of Proto-Arabic modal system, II-*Y/W* and III-*Y/W* roots (imperatives)

Mood	**2MSG**	**2FSG**	**2MPL**
Imperative	كن *kun*	كوني *kūnī*	كونوا *kūnū*
	ابن *(V)bni*	ابني *(V)bnī*	ابنوا *(V)bnū*

While the distribution of modal forms in Vat. Ar. 13 corresponds to a significant degree with this reconstructed verbal system, there are nevertheless differences in a minority of cases primarily in two aspects: (1) the distribution of indicative versus non-indicative forms and (2) short versus long spellings of jussives and imperatives. The goal of this chapter is to investigate the distribution of these differences, with reference to this Proto-Arabic system. As elsewhere, however, the most relevant comparanda will be not just the *ʿArabiyyah* data adduced by the grammarians, but also Quranic *qirāʾāt*, early Islamic-era papyri, as well as modern dialects, but especially the other Arabic MSS produced by Christians in Syria and Palestine.

Before beginning the analysis, a word about methodology is due. I have made every effort to record every instance of an eligible imperfect and include it in the data presented in this chapter. However, in non-vocalised hands (especially Hands A–C), indicative and subjunctive forms are distinguishable only in the FSG, dual, and MPL forms. So, for example, the strong verb 3MSG يكتب could be indicative, subjunctive, or jussive; it is impossible to know which from the consonantal form of the word alone. Likewise, jussive forms are distinguishable from Subjunctive ones only in the singular (excluding 2FSG), when the root is II-*Y/W* or III-*Y/W*. In many cases, then, all that can be specified

about a verbal form from its consonantal spelling is that it is non-indicative. In order to explore the distribution of different modal forms with as much clarity as possible, I categorised verbal forms based on two factors, namely morphological form and syntactic context. In terms of verbal form, I reserved the designation 'jussive' for II-*Y/W* and III-*Y/W* roots spelled short in the singular, and labelled forms like تكتبي / يكتبوا with the more general 'non-indicative' label. Thus, يكن is labelled 'jussive' but يكتبوا is labelled 'non-indicative'. Where a II-*Y/W* or III-*Y/W* form is spelled long in a jussive context, I have used the designation 'non-jussive'. So, in cases of, e.g., لم يكون I have labelled such a form 'non-jussive'. Finally, when an imperative of II-*Y/W* and III-*Y/W* roots is spelled long, I use the designation 'long imperative'. Therefore a form such as امشي is labelled 'long imperative', contrasting with امش, which I designate 'short imperative'.

As we will see, modal inflection is largely congruent with the system attested in the Quran and *ʿArabiyyah*, and reconstructible to Proto-Arabic, wherein main verb contexts predominantly trigger indicative forms and subordinated syntactic contexts trigger non-indicative ones. In some syntactic contexts, however, there is a degree of variation that requires explanation. In §1.0 I address variation in category (1) above, detailing the syntactic contexts in which both indicative and non-indicative forms occur (instead of just one, as would be expected from a purely syntactically determined distribution of forms). I will argue that this variation is not random, and that a number of factors account for the majority of the variation. These factors in-

clude contextual, semantic, pragmatic, and morphological considerations. In §2.0 I address the question in category (2) above, i.e., whether the jussive mood consisted of a separate modal category or not based on short versus long spellings of jussives and imperatives. I will show that the variation here again is not random, but patterned, and represents a change-in-progress in which the morphological distinction between apocopates is being lost. This change is more advanced in III-*Y/W* roots than in II-*Y/W* ones, and is perhaps affected by syntagm, with *lam* + jussive being affected more than *(fa)-li* + jussive. I will then compare this data with that taken from other Arabic Gospel manuscripts, and draw on relevant parallels from other corpora, including the *ʿArabiyyah*, Quranic *qirāʾāt*, and contemporary inscriptional evidence in §3.0, showing that each phenomenon in (1) and (2) has ample parallels in various early Islamic-era corpora.

1.0. Form and Function: Indicative and Non-Indicative Forms and their Contexts

Indicative and Non-Indicative verbal forms in the vast majority of instances occur prototypically across the MS. There are a number of syntactic contexts, however, in which both indicative and non-indicative forms occur, as Table 39 shows.

Table 39: Indicative/non-indicative verbal forms and their syntactic distribution, all hands

	Indic. Contexts	**Non-Indic. Contexts**	**Totals**
Indic. Forms	529 (97%)	17 (3%)	546
Non-Indic. Forms	22 (10%)	206 (90%)	228
Totals	551	223	774
Significance (Fisher's exact test) p = .00001			

Non-Indicative forms in indicative contexts occur more frequently than indicative forms in non-indicative contexts across all portions of the Gospels, and the difference is significant. While the same basic distributions characterise the different scribal hands, one important difference emerges when the data are broken down by hand.

Table 40: Indicative/Non-Indicative forms and their syntactic contexts, Hand A

	Indic. Contexts	**Non-Indic. Contexts**	**Totals**
Indic. Forms	337 (97%)	11 (3%)	348
Non-Indic. Forms	10 (7%)	141 (93%)	151
Totals	347	152	499

Table 41: Indicative/Non-Indicative forms and their syntactic contexts, Hand B

	Indic. Contexts	**Non-Indic. Contexts**	**Totals**
Indic. Forms	106 (99%)	1 (1%)	107
Non-Indic. Forms	4 (15%)	23 (85%)	27
Totals	110	24	134

Table 42: Indicative/Non-Indicative forms and their syntactic contexts, Hand C

	Indic. Contexts	**Non-Indic. Contexts**	**Totals**
Indic. Forms	20 (83%)	4 (17%)	24
Non-Indic. Forms	2 (11%)	16 (89%)	18
Totals	22	20	42

Table 43: Indicative/Non-Indicative forms and their syntactic contexts, Hand D

	Indic. Contexts	**Non-Indic. Contexts**	**Totals**
Indic. Forms	66 (99%)	1 (1%)	67
Non-Indic. Forms	6 (19%)	26 (81%)	32
Totals	72	27	99

Hand C once again differs notably from Hands A, B, and D. In those hands, non-indicative forms in indicative contexts occur with a higher relative percentage than indicative forms in non-indicative contexts. In Hand C, however, the opposite is true, with indicative forms in non-indicative contexts relatively more frequent.

Understanding the attested variation is the goal of the rest of this section. We will see that semantic, syntactic, and morphological factors combine to explain the vast majority of the variation. The data based on syntactic context for all hands is presented in Table 44. Note that for both indicative and non-indicative forms, the percentages in parentheses are for the construction (i.e., read horizontally), not of all indicative or ion-indicative forms. Thus, in the first row, 98 percent of imperfects in main verb clauses with simple present, present continuous, or gnomic semantics are indicative.

Table 44: Syntactic contexts and the distribution of indicative versus non-indicative forms

	Construction	**Indic. Forms (% of Total)**	**Non-Indic. Forms (% of Total)**	**Totals**
Main Verbs	Impf. – Present/Continuous/ Gnomic Semantics	86 (98%)	2 (2%)	88
	Impf. – Future Semantics	73 (94%)	5 (6%)	78
	sa(wfa) + Imperfect	8 (73%)	3 (27%)	11
	Coordinated Circumstantial Clause (*Ḥāl*)	39 (100%)	—	39
	Impf. – after *badaʾa/ǧaʿala/kāna*	152 (99%)	1 (1%)	153
	Syndetic Relative Clause	46 (96%)	2 (4%)	48
	Asyndetic Relative Clause	5 (83%)	1 (17%)	6
	Subordinate Clauses – *mā/kayfa*	22 (100%)	—	22
	Interrogative Clause	29 (91%)	3 (9%)	32

	Construction	Indic. Forms (% of Total)	Non-Indic. Forms (% of Total)	Totals
Negated Main Verbs	Negated Main Verb	28 (90%)	3 (10%)	31
	Negated Main Verb of Relative Clause	4 (100%)	—	4
	Negated Interrogative + Main Verb	13 (93%)	1 (7%)	14
Adverbial	Subordinated – Adverbial Clause	3 (100%)	—	3
Resultative Clauses	*fa* + Imperfect	3 (27%)	8 (73%)	11
	wa + Imperfect	—	1 (100%)	1
	Asyndetic Clause – Result of Imperative	—	3 (100%)	3
Subordinating Conjunctions	*ḥattā* + Imperfect ("until")	3 (60%)	2 (40%)	5
	laʿalla + pronoun/Noun + Imperfect	7 (100%)	—	7
Complement Clauses	*ʾan* + Imperfect	3 (5%)	55 (95%)	58
	lan + Imperfect	1 (50%)	1 (50%)	2
	Complement of *daʿā*	3 (100%)	—	3
Purpose Clauses	*li* + Imperfect	4 (8%)	44 (92%)	48
	likay + Imperfect	1 (100%)	—	1
	kay-mā + Imperfect	—	1 (100%)	1
Negated Purpose Clauses	*kay-lā/likay-lā* + Imperfect	2 (29%)	5 (71%)	7
	ʾallā/li-ʾan lā /li-ʾallā/ʾan + *lā* + Imperfect	1 (6%)	17 (94%)	18
Conditional	Protasis of *ʾiḏā*	1 (100%)	—	1
	Apodosis of *ʾin*	1 (100%)	—	1

Some of the variation can be seen as reflecting speaker/author stance, or what we might call 'speaker-oriented modality'[2]—that is, reflecting a true modal nuance—in defiance of a strict syntactic distribution. This effect is noticeable especially in the subset of contexts in which a non-indicative form occurs in a syntactic context that normally triggers the indicative. Where the

[2] I thank one of the reviewers of the book for suggesting this phrase.

commitment to, or certainty of, the action from the point of view of the speaker is lower, non-indicatives can occur. For example, non-indicatives occur several times in interrogative clauses.

(231) (19r) ياولاد الافاعى وانا تقدروا علي ان نطقوا بالخيرات وانتم اشرار
yʾwlʾd ʾl-ʾfʿy w-ʾnʾ tqdrwʾ ʿly ʾn tnṭqwʾ b-ʾl-ḫyrʾt w-ʾntm ʾšrʾr
'Oh, you sons of vipers, how are you able to speak good things even though you are evil?'

(232) اطلعاه واتيانى به فان قال لكما فيه قايل لم تصنعا هدا او ما هذا الذي تصنعان (66r)
ʾṭlʿ-h w-ʾtyʾ-ny b-h f-ʾn qʾl l-kmʾ fy-h qʾyl lm tṣnʿ hdʾ ʾw mʾ hḏʾ ʾlḏy tṣnʿn
'Untie it and bring it to me, and if anyone says something to you about it, such as "Why are you doing this?" or "What is this that you are doing?"'

Another context that occasionally triggers the use of non-indicative forms involves the negation of the main verb of a clause.

(233) (39r) والذين نطلبونها ويريدون الدخول فلا ندعوهم يصلون اليها
w-ʾlḏyn yṭlbwn-hʾ w-yrydwn ʾl-dḫwl f-lʾ tdʿw-hm yṣlwn ʾly-hʾ
'Those seeking it [the kingdom] and who want to enter they do not allow them to reach it'

(234) (70v) فاستيقطوا الان من سنه الغفله لانكم لا نعلمو متا ياتى رب البيت
f-ʾstyqẓṭwʾ ʾl-ʾn mn snh ʾl-ġflh l-ʾn-km lʾ tʿlmw mtʾ yʾty rb ʾl-byt
'So stay alert and beware the tradition of ignorance, because you do not know when the lord of the manor will come'

Main verbs expressing future action, and especially in passive voice, are non-indicative in several places across the MS.

(235) لا تدينوُا ليلا تدانوُا فبالدين الذي تدينون تدانوا (8r)
lʾ tdynuwʾ l-ylʾ tdʾnuwʾ f-b-ʾl-dyn ʾlḏy tdynwn tdʾnwʾ
'Do not judge, so that you are not judged, for by the same way you judged, you will be judged (SUBJ)'

(236) فلما جاو الاولون خالوا انهم سيعطوا اكثر من ذلك فاعطوا هم ايضا دينار دينار (32v)
f-lmʾ ǧʾw ʾl-ʾwlwn ḫʾlwʾ ʾn-hm s-yʿṭwʾ ʾkṯr mn ḏlk f-ʾʿṭwʾ hm ʾyḍʾ dynʾr dynʾr
'So when the first [to be hired] came, they expected that they would be given (SUBJ) more than that, but they were also given each a denarius'.

There seems further to be a correlation between non-indicative form and the semantics associated with verbs of ability.

(237) يايها الحايفون المرايون الاخدون بالوجوه تحسنوا ان تفحصوا اديم السما (26v)
yʾyhʾ ʾl-ḥʾyfwn ʾl-mrʾywn ʾl-ʾḫdwn b-ʾl-wǧwh tḥsnwʾ ʾn tfḥṣwʾ ʾdym ʾl-smʾ
'Oh you who fear, you hypocrites, you can (SUBJ) discern the redness of the heavens...'

(238) قال لهم عند ذلك لا يقدروا ان يكونوا ابنا النجاد والخدر صياما ما دام العروس معهم (79r)
qʾl l-hm ʿnd ḏlk lʾ yqdrwʾ ʾn ykwnwʾ ʾbnʾ ʾl-nǧʾd w-ʾl-ḫdr ṣyʾmʾ mʾ dʾm ʾl-ʿrws mʿ-hm
'Then he said to them, "The groomsmen cannot (SUBJ) fast while the bridegroom is with them"'

Elsewhere, syntax seems to play a role. For example, a non-indicative form occurs once in the context of an asyndetic relative clause.

(239) جَعَل لهم عَلامه يعرفوها (53v)
ǧaʿal l-hm ʿalʾmh yʿrfw-hʾ
'He made a sign for them that they know (NON-INDIC)'

In at least one instance, a non-indicative occurs in what I suggest is a coordinate clause that expresses the result of the preceding main clause.

(240) ويثب البنون علي ابايهم فيقتلونهم ويكونوا منشقّين عند جميع عوانه (14v)
w-yṯb ʾl-bnwn ʿly ʾbʾy-hm f-yqtlwn-hm w-ykwnwʾ mnšqqyn ʿnd ǧmyʿ ʿwʾn-h
'Sons will attack their fathers and kill them, and will consequently be cut off from all their kinsmen'

As we will see in §3.0 below, non-indicatives occur in these contexts in multiple other Arabic corpora, pre-modern and modern. Indicative verbs occurring in syntactically non-indicative contexts likewise seem at least in some instances to reflect a modal nuance, this time a high commitment to the veracity of the action from the point of view of the speaker/author. This is perhaps especially the case in the few examples of an indicative form following the subordinator *ʾan*.

(241) وكانوا يهابون ان يسالونه (62v)
w-kʾnwʾ yhʾnwn ʾn ysʾlwn-h
'And they were embarrassed to ask (INDIC) him'

(242) فلا تشبهوهم الان فان اباكم عارف بما تحتاجون اليه قبل ان تسالونه (6r)
f-lʾ tšbhw-hm ʾl-ʾn f-ʾn ʾbʾ-km ʿʾrf b-mʾ tḥtʾǧwn ʾly-h qbl ʾn tsʾlwn-h
'So do not be like them, for your Father who is in heaven knows what you need before you ask (INDIC) him'

In both examples, the verb in the subordinate clause does not express a wish or intent, but rather an act that is assumed to occur. The occurrence of the indicative (or the perfect) after *ʾan* in such contexts is well-known, even in Classical Arabic (Wright 1896, II:19; see further §3.0 below). A similar explanation is likely behind the occurrence of the Indicative after the subordinating conjunction *ḥattā* with the meaning 'until':

(243) والحق اقول لكم ان هاهنا قوما لا يذوقون الموت ولن يصل اليهم حتى يعاينون ابن البشر مقبلا فى ملكوته (27r)
w-ʾl-ḥq ʾqwl l-km ʾn hʾhnʾ qwmʾ lʾ yḏwqwn ʾl-mwt w-ln yṣl ʾly-hm ḥty yʿʾynwn ʾbn ʾl-bšr mqblʾ fy mlkwt-h
'The truth I tell you, there are people here who will not taste death, and it will not reach them, until they see (INDIC) the Son of Man coming in his kingdom'

Here again, the lack of intent, coupled with the expectation of the veracity of the event, likely triggers the use of the indicative instead of non-indicative.

A firm commitment to the action, or its negation, may also be responsible for the use of the Indicative following the future negator *lan* in the following example from Hand C.

(244) ان لم يفوق بركم الكتبه والاحبار لن تدخلون الى ملكوت السما (4v)
ʾn lm yfwq br-km ʾl-ktbh w-ʾl-ʾḥbʾr ln tdẖlwn ʾly mlkwt ʾl-smʾ
'If your righteousness does not exceed the scribes and the Pharisees, you will certainly not enter (INDIC) into the Kingdom of Heaven'

As in other early Christian Arabic MSS, the future negator *lan* is relatively rare in Vat. Ar. 13. The only other instance of the negator *lan* occurs in a section copied by Hand A, where it is followed by a non-indicative.

(245) لن تلجوا ملكوت السما ونعيمها (29r)
ln tlğwʾ mlkwt ʾl-smʾ w-nʿym-hʾ
'You will not find refuge in the Kingdom of Heaven and its paradise'

It seems likely that these two forms represent differences in the grammars of the two scribes. Interestingly, of the six instances of atypical modal inflection in Hand C, four of six (67 percent) involve indicative forms, each of which occurs in a context in which the statement is absolute or made with high confidence from the point of view of the speaker/narrator.

Another category where we find consistent use of the indicative, where we would expect non-indicatives is in asyndetic clauses following the command *daʿ* 'let…!', expressing the intent of the command (see, e.g., Fischer 2002, 211, §412).

(246) اتبعني ودع الموتي يدفنُون موتاهم (11r)
ʾtbʿ-ny w-dʿ ʾl-mwty ydfnuwn mwtʾ-hm
'Follow me, and let the dead bury (INDIC) their own'

(247) ولكن دعوهما ينشوان جميعا الى اوان الحصاد (21r)
w-lkn dʿw-hmʾ ynšwʾn ğmyʿʾ ʾly ʾwʾn ʾl-ḥṣʾd
'But rather, let them both [wheat and tares] grow (DU INDIC) together until the time of the harvest'

(248) وقال لهم دعوا الاطفال يدنون مني ولا تمنعوهم (64r)
w-qʾl l-hm dʿwʾ ʾl-ʾṭfʾl ydnwn mn-y w-lʾ tmnʿw-hm

> 'And he said to them, "Let the children come (INDIC) to me and do not prevent them"'

It is not immediately clear why the indicative would be used instead of the non-indicative in these verses. While it is possible to appeal to, e.g., hypercorrection, I suggest that we are dealing with a translation effect, in this case from the Peshitta likely underlying this portion of the text. In each case, the combination translated with *daʿ(ū)* + indicative in Syriac is *šḇūq(ū)* 'leave, let!' + active participle. In Syriac, the participle can occur in a number of different kinds of subordinate clauses, including as the object of another verb.[3] Given the consistency of the use of the indicative in the MS to translate this construction, it seems plausible that it reflects the equation of the Arabic indicative with the Syriac participle, and the translation philosophy in these cases overrode any modal implications.

While most of the examples can be explained without appealing to a kind of hypercorrection, one context in which indicatives occasionally occur instead of non-indicative forms, and where another explanation is not always immediately forthcoming, is that of purpose clauses. These examples include imperfects with *li-* and *(li)kay*, as well as the negative particles *li-ʾan lā* and *likay-lā*.

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[3] On this construction in Syriac, especially in the Syriac New Testament translations, see Nöldeke (1904, 214, §272). Incidentally, this is also true of the participle in Christian Palestinian Aramaic (Schultess 1924, 87).

(249) الذين اتوه ليسمعون كلامه وليبروا من اسقامهم واوجاعهم (80v)
ʾlḏyn ʾtw-h l-ysmʿwn klʾm-h w-lybrwʾ mn ʾsqʾm-hm w-ʾwǧʾʿ-hm
'They who came to him came to hear (INDIC) him talk and to be healed (NON-INDIC) of their sickness and pain'

(250) ارسلوا اليه قوما من الكتبه ومن اصحاب هيرودس ليمكرو به في كلمه ليسترقوها منه (68r)
ʾrslwʾ ʾly-h qwmʾ mn ʾl-ktbh w-mn ʾṣḥʾb hyrwds l-ymkrw b-h fy klmh l-ystrqwn-hʾ mn-h
'They sent to him [Jesus] a group of scribes, and from the supporters of Herod, in order to trick him (NON-INDIC) by some word, that they might duplicitously get (INDIC) it from him'

(251) لان متا فعلت صدقه لا تنادى بالقرن قدامك كما يصنع المراوون والاخدون بالوجوه... لكى يمدحون من الناس (5v)
l-ʾn mtʾ fʿlt ṣdqh lʾ tnʾdy b-ʾl-qrn qdʾm-k kmʾ yṣnʿ ʾl-mrʾwwn w-ʾl-ʾḫdwn b-ʾl-wjwh... l-ky ymdḥwn mn ʾl-nʾs
'For whenever you do your act of kindness, do not announce with the trumpet before you as the hypocrites do... so that they will be praised (INDIC) by people'

(252) حقا لعمرك اقلب هذا الشعب ولم يسمعوا بادانهم الا سمعا ثقيلا وغمضوا اعينهم عن البصر لكى لا يبصروا باعينهم ويسمعون بادانهم ويفكرون بقلوبهم ثم يقبلوا فاشفيهم (20v)
ḥqʾ l-ʿmr-k ʾqlb hḏʾ ʾl-šʿb w-lm ysmʿwʾ b-ʾdʾn-hm ʾlʾ smʿʾ ṯqylʾ w-ġmḍwʾ ʾʿyn-hm ʿn ʾl-bṣr l-ky lʾ ybṣrwʾ b-ʾʿyn-hm w-ysmʿwn b-ʾdʾn-hm w-yfkrwn b-qlwb-hm ṯm yqblwʾ f-ʾšfy-hm
'Truly, the hearts of this people have become wicked, and they have only heard dully, and they have closed their ears from truly seeing, in order that they not see (NON-INDIC) with their eyes and hear (INDIC) with their ears and

> do not perceive (INDIC) with their hearts, then they would accept [the message] (NON-INDIC), I would heal them'

In these cases, translation effect is unlikely, not least because in several of the above examples both the expected subjunctive and unexpected indicative forms occur, sometimes one after the other, whereas the underlying *Vorlagen*—whether Syriac or Greek—both use the same verbal forms for each verb in the series. It is possible that examples such as these were due to occasional influence from a dialect in which the subjunctive was expanding as the unmarked imperfect in all syntactic contexts (on which, see further in §3.0 below), and that the scribe(s) hypercorrected. However, other possibilities exist, such as that distance from the subordinating particle led to an increased likelihood of indicative inflection. In the final example, it is possible that the two indicative verbs were seen, not as contingent upon the first, but subsequent, which led to a sense that the indicative was more appropriate than the non-indicative. As we will see below in §3.0, examples of this kind of inflectional asymmetry between indicative and non-indicative are attested in no less a corpus than the Quranic *qirāʾāt*.

In addition to the semantic, syntactic, and translational factors discussed above, a morphological factor—the presence of a pronominal suffix—has a significant effect on the likelihood of non-indicative forms occurring in indicative contexts. Multiple studies of early corpora noted the apparent correlation between pronominal suffixation and an increased likelihood for the non-indicative to occur, regardless of syntax (see most notably Blau

1966–1967, 264–65). The only study to attempt to study the effect statistically did not find a statistically significant effect, though the data was suggestive (Stokes 2024a, 376). The data for Vat. Ar. 13 is presented in Table 45.

Table 45: Effect of pronominal suffixes on occurrence of non-indicative forms in indicative contexts

Suffix	**Indic. Form in Indic. Context**	**Non-Indic. Form in Indic. Context**
+ Pronominal Suffix	93 (92%)	8 (8%)
− Pronominal Suffix	436 (97%)	14 (3%)
Significance (Fisher's exact test) p = .043		

Though the data set is small, it is statistically significant in Vat. Ar. 13. The occurrence of a pronominal suffix clearly correlates in a non-random way with the use of the non-indicative form. Note especially the following examples.

(253) وجعلوا يمجدون الله ويسبحوه (78v)
w-ǧʿlwʾ ymǧdwn ʾllh w-ysbḥw-h
'And they began glorifying (INDIC) God and praising him (NON-INDIC)'

(254) حبوا اعداكم وباركوا من يلعنكم وافعلوا الخير بمن يبغضكم وصلوا علي الدين يصخروكم كره ويطردوكم (5r–v)
ḥbwʾ ʾʿdʾ-km w-bʾrkwʾ mn ylʿn-km w-ʾfʿlwʾ ʾl-ḫyr b-mn ybġḍ-km w-ṣlwʾ ʿly ʾldyn yṣḫrw-km krh w-yṭrdw-km
'Love your enemies and bless the one who curses you. Do good to whoever hates you, and pray for those who hatefully scorn (NON-INDIC) you and who persecute you (NON-INDIC)'

In several places it is difficult to know whether the choice of form is driven by the morphological factor of pronominal suffixation or by some other semantic or syntactic factors discussed above.

(255) وهو يتقدّمكم الي الجليلِ هناك تعاينوُه (54v)
w-hw ytqddm-km ʾly ʾl-ǧlyli hnʾk tʿʾynwu-h
'And he will go ahead of you to Galilee, there you will see (NON-INDIC) him'

It is unclear, and impossible to determine, whether the future semantics or rather the pronominal suffix is primarily responsible for the non-indicative verbal form in the above verse. Elsewhere, though, the effect of the pronominal suffix seems more straightforwardly important:

(256) ما بال اربايك لا يعملون ببدعه الاشياخ ورواياتهم وما امروا وعملوا بل يحالفوهم وياكلون الحبر من عير ان يغسلوا ايديهم (86r)
mʾ bʾl ʾrbʾy-k lʾ yʿmlwn b-bdʿh ʾl-ʾšyʾḫ w-rwʾyʾt-hm w-mʾ ʾmrwʾ w-ʿmlwʾ bl yḫʾlfw-hm w-yʾklwn ʾl-ḫbz mn ġyr ʾn yġslwʾ ʾydy-hm
'Why do your disciples not act according to the teaching of the elders and their stories and what they commanded and practiced, but instead they contradict (NON-INDIC) them, and they eat (INDIC) bread without washing their hands'

In this verse, two verbs occur consecutively, the first with a pronominal suffix and non-indicative, whereas the second lacks the pronominal suffix and is indicative.

Overall, the distribution of indicative and non-indicative modal forms in Vat. Ar. 13 is mostly syntactically determined,

but with variation in certain contexts due to several semantic factors, such as salience of the subject, speaker/author positionality related to the degree of commitment to the action, the morphological factor of pronominal suffixation, and, in the case of one underlying Syriac syntagm, perhaps due to a translational formulaic effect. It remains to be seen whether the category of the apocopate, which historically characterised both the finite verbal mood of the jussive, as well as the imperative, remained distinct morphologically in the language attested in Vat. Ar. 13. We turn now to a study of short versus long spellings of the jussives and imperatives of II-*Y/W* and III-*Y/W* roots in the MS.

2.0. Long versus Short Spellings of Jussives and Imperatives of II/III-*Y/W* Roots

The jussive/apocopate, also called 'short imperfect', is attested in Vat. Ar. 13 in several syntactic contexts, especially including following the negative adverb *lam* to negate the simple past or the present perfect, in the *(fa)-li* syntagm to express a wish or order, as well as the protasis and apodosis of conditional particles, especially *ʾin*, and following *lā* to express the negative imperative. As with any unvocalised manuscript, so in Vat. Ar. 13, the jussive is distinguishable from the subjunctive only in II-*Y/W* and III-*Y/W* roots. While there are no examples of indicative forms in the above syntactic categories, there are both *plene*/short and defective/long spellings of II-*Y/W* and III-*Y/W* root jussives and imperatives. In fact, almost a quarter (27/114 = 24 percent) are spelled long. However, as can be seen in Table 46, when we break

down the distribution of long versus short spellings by root type (that is, whether II-*Y/W* or III-*Y/W*), a clear trend emerges.

Table 46: Correlation between root type and spelling of Jussives/Imperatives

Spelling	**II-*Y/W***	**III-*Y/W***	**Totals**
Plene Spelling	7	20	27
Short Spelling	58	29	87
Totals	65	49	114
Significance (Fisher's exact test) p = .0003			

The morphological category of root type is a significant factor in determining the likelihood of *plene* versus defective spellings of jussives and imperatives. The defective/short spelling of II-*Y/W* roots (89 percent) is much more frequent than that of III-*Y/W* roots (59 percent).

Root morphology is not the only factor that impacts the likelihood of a short versus long spelling, however; syntax also has an effect. It is possible, for example, that certain cues, such as the presence of particles like *lam* and *li-*, triggered short spellings more frequently than, e.g., with imperatives. Table 47 presents the data for weak roots by syntactic category.

Table 47: Spelling variation of weak roots by syntactic category, jussives versus imperatives

Spelling	**Jussives**	**Imperatives**	**Totals**
Plene Spelling	11	16	27
Short Spelling	54	33	87
Totals	65	49	114
Significance (Fisher's exact test) p = .0742			

The results of the comparison between syntactic categories revealed no statistically significant difference between spellings of

jussives compared with imperatives, though the p value is certainly suggestive of a tendency for imperatives to be spelled *plene* more than jussives. We might wonder whether within the category of jussives there is a tendency for one to be spelled short versus another. In Table 48, I provide the data and statistical analysis for the two largest categories of jussives, those following *(fa)li-* to express a wish and those following *lam* to negate the past tense.

Table 48: Impact of syntax on short versus long imperfect spellings

Spelling	***(fa-)li***	***lam***
Short	16	40
Long	0	11
Significance (Fisher's exact test) p = .1024		

The difference in the data does not reach the level of significance. Nevertheless, the fact that 20 percent of the examples of *lam* + jussive are spelled long, whereas there are no examples of *plene* spellings of jussives in the *(fa)-li* syntagm, again suggests some kind of distinction in the grammar of the scribes responsible for the MS. One possibility is that behind this trend stands the nascent generalisation of *lam* as a negator for all tenses and contexts, a development well-attested in later corpora (Lentin 1997, 764–67; Wagner 2010, 132–60).[4] Alternatively, there may have been some phonetic difference between the realisation of verbal forms following *lam* and *(fa-)li*, with perhaps the latter preserving a short realisation longer than the context following *lam* by virtue

[4] See also numerous references to this feature, with both verbal and nominal clauses, from the Ottoman period in the collection edited by Esther-Miriam Wagner (2021).

of its clitic status, i.e., **fá-l(i)-takun* but **lam yakún > lam yakūn*, though this must of course remain a matter of speculation.

In the case of long versus short spellings of jussives and imperatives, unlike with the indicative/non-indicative contrast examined above, there seems to be an important correlation between scribal hand and tendency towards certain spellings. The data are presented in Table 49.

Table 49: Long versus Short spellings of jussives and imperatives by scribal hand

Spellings	Hand A	Hand B	Hand C	Hand D
Short Spellings	153 (92%)	53 (91%)	26 (77%)	71 (99%)
Long Spellings	13 (8%)	5 (9%)	8 (23%)	1 (1%)
Totals	166	58	34	72
Significance (X^2) p = .0017				

The two earliest hands, Hand A and Hand B, both attest roughly the same proportions of short versus long spellings, essentially writing one in ten jussive or imperative forms long. As we have seen in other domains of the grammar, Hand C tends to be the least classical/normative when it comes to spelling these forms, being over twice as likely to use a long spelling as Hands A and B. Here as elsewhere, Hand D, the latest scribal hand, hews closest to the norms of classical spelling, with only one long spelling of a jussive out of 72 instances. These differences in hands do reach the level of statistical significance via a X^2 test.

To sum up, the primary factors increasing the likelihood of *plene* versus short spellings of jussives that can be identified and reach the level of statistical significance are root type and scribal hand. Interestingly, the earliest hands (Hands A and B) stand in

the middle of the spectrum of spelling tendencies, while one restorative hand (Hand C) much more freely spells jussives and imperatives long, whereas the latest hand (Hand D) brings spellings into line with classical orthography in all but one instance. As in other corpora, and probably inherited from the Ur-text from which the present copy was made, III-*Y/W* roots are much likelier to be spelled long than II-*Y/W* roots (Stokes 2024b). This is perhaps best illustrated with the following example, taken from the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6, in which the jussive of the II-*Y/W* root is spelled short, but the jussive of the III-*Y/W* root is spelled long.

(257) ابانا الدى فى السما تقدس اسمك تاتي ملكوتك تكن مشيتك (6r)
ʾbʾ-nʾ ʾldy fy ʾl-smʾ tqds ʾsm-k tʾty mlkwt-k tkn mšyt-k
'Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed by your name. Your kingdom come (*plene*), your will be done (short)....'

3.0. Comparison with Other Corpora

3.1. Comparison of Indicative and Non-indicative Forms and Their Contexts

The modal system outlined above shares the same morphological forms with the *ʿArabiyyah* corpus, the three forms of which can certainly be reconstructed to Proto-Arabic (Huehnergard 2017; Al-Jallad 2018; Stokes 2024a). As we have already seen, in the Proto-Arabic system, the subjunctive and jussive forms seem to have been largely syntactically determined, with only secondary, if any, reference to the speaker's/writer's position with respect to

the action of the verb (as pointed out many times, e.g., in Cowell 1964, 343).

There are nevertheless areas in which semantics and speaker positionality are factors specifically in the choice of indicative versus subjunctive in the *ʿArabiyyah* tradition. For example, while the subordinating particle *ʾan* typically triggers the subjunctive, this is not universally the case. It triggers the subjunctive mainly when the clause expresses intent or purpose; otherwise, the indicative (or a perfect) follows, e.g., أَعْلَمُ أَنْ نَامَ / يَنَامُ *ʾaʿlamu ʾan nāma / yanāmu* 'I know that he slept / is sleeping' (Fischer 2002, 109, §196b1). An instance of the indicative complement of the verb *ʿalima* 'he knows' + *ʾan* occurs in the Quran at:

(258) وَللهُ يُقَدِّرُ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ عَلِمَ أَن لَّن تُحْصُوهُ فَتَابَ عَلَيكُم فَاقْرَءُوا مَا تَيَسَّرَ مِنَ القُرءَانِ عَلِمَ أن سَيَكُونُ مِنكُم مَّرْضَى (Q73.20)

wa-llāhu yuqaddiru l-layla wa-n-nahāra ʿalima ʾan lan tuḥṣū-hu fa-tāba ʿalay-kum fa-qraʾū mā tayassara mina l-qurʾān ʿalima ʾan sa-yakūnu min-kum marḍā

'God alone keeps precise measures of the day and night. He knows that you are unable to endure this, and has turned to you in mercy. So recite whatever you can from the Quran. He knows that some of you will be sick...'

Variation between *ʾan* + subjunctive and *ʾan* + indicative occurs in Vat. Ar. 13, and indeed other early Gospel MSS (Stokes 2024a, 392–96), and this semantic distinction appears to have played a role in the early Christian MSS in general. Note the following pairs.

(259) فيما كان الناس عتيدين ان يقولون فيه (BL 4950, 11r)
fy-mʾ kʾn ʾl-nʾs ʿtydyn ʾn yqwlwn fy-h
'While people were ready to say (INDIC) something about it'

(260) ولا بد من ان يكونوا هاولي على احد امرين (BL 4950, 10r)
w-lʾ bd mn ʾn ykwnwʾ hʾwly ʿly ʾhḍ ʾmryn
'These must be (NON-INDIC) on one of two sides'

(261) اتستطعيون ان تشربون الكاس التي انا شاربها (SAr. 75, 20v)
ʾ-tstṭyʿwn ʾn tšrbwn ʾl-kʾs ʾlty ʾnʾ šʾrb-hʾ
'Are you able to drink (INDIC) the cup that I drink'

(262) وان شيتم ان تقبلوا (SAr. 75, 12r)
w-ʾn šy-tm ʾn tqblwʾ
'And if you wish to accept (NON-INDIC)'

(263) فاما ان تجلسون عن يميني او عن شمالي ليس لي ان اعُطى (SAr. 70, 24v)
f-ʾmʾ ʾn tǧlswn ʿn ymyn-y ʾw ʿn šmʾl-y lys l-y ʾn ʾuʿṭy
'But that you may sit (INDIC) on my right or on my left, that is not mine to give'

(264) واتمروا على يسوع ان ياخذوه مكرا ويقتلوه (SAr. 70, 31r)
w-ʾtmrwʾ ʿly ysw̓ ʾn yʾḫḏw-h mkrʾ w-yqtlw-h
'And they conspired together against Jesus to take him (NON-INDIC) by deceit and then to kill (NON-INDIC) him'

Syntactically, verbal complementation consists of the *ʾan* + *yafʿal* pattern in Vat. Ar. 13, with the subordinating particle, and most other Christian MSS regularly attest it as well; however, almost all of the early Christian MSS also attest a serialised verbal sequence without *ʾan*, in roughly equal numbers as the *ʾan* +

yafʿal syntagm.[5] The same kind of semantic considerations are at play in the following.

(265) وان يسوع قال لهم ليس يحتاجون يذهبون (SAr. 74, 32r)
w-ʾn ysw‘ qʾl l-hm lys yḥtʾǧwn yḏhbwn
‘And Jesus said to them, “They do not need to go (INDIC)”’

(266) هوذه امك واخوتك خارج يريدون يكلموك (SAr. 74, 27r)
hwḏh ʾm-k w-ʾḫwt-k ḫʾrǧ yrydwn yklmw-k
‘Here are your mother and brothers outside; they want to talk (NON-INDIC) to you’

If Al-Jallad’s (2020a) argument about the spread of Old Ḥiǧāzī dialects in the wake of the Islamic conquest of the Levant is accurate, then the co-occurrence of these two syntagms may reflect a transitional state between the once-ubiquitous *ʾan* + *yafʿal* means for syntactical complementation and the serial verb constructions of the modern dialects.

The impact of semantics on modal inflection is known from the corpus of Quranic *qirāʾāt*, where the readers occasionally disagreed over the interpretation and appropriate inflection of a singular imperfect verb. The quintessential example involves the (in)famous controversy over the correct mood of the verb *yakūn*

[5] The one exception among the eight MSS included here (see Table 49, above) is BL 4950, which attests only *ʾan* + *yafʿal* complementation. Note that the *ʾan* + *yafʿal* syntagm is likely a post-Proto-Arabic innovation, perhaps a Ḥiǧāzī one (Al-Jallad 2022, 116). The pre-Islamic dialects represented in the Safaitic corpus, for example, attest a nominal form instead of a finite verb in complement clauses (Al-Jallad 2015, 182–84, §16.1). Modern dialects mostly attest a serial verb construction similar to the one attested in the Christian corpus detailed here.

in the Quranic phrase, *kun fa-yakūn* 'be, and it is/will be' (in, e.g., Q2.117; Q3.59; Q19.35), which was read by the majority as indicative, i.e., *kun fa-yakūnu*, but by Ibn ʿĀmir as a subjunctive, i.e., as *kun fa-yakūna*. The crux of the disagreement was over how to interpret the relationship between the imperative *kun* 'be!', and the imperfect after the particle *fa*. Imperfects following *fa-* in the subjunctive often express the result or consequence of the first verb, prompting the grammarians to label this *fa al-sababiyyah* 'the causal *fa*'. Prescriptively, in order to qualify as *fa al-sababiyyah*, and therefore trigger a subjunctive, the preceding verbal phrase should include one of the following: an affirmative or negative imperative; an expression of a wish or hope; an interrogative; a negative statement (Wright 1896, II:21–22; Nasser 2015, 92). In the example of *kun fa-yakūn*, there are no syntactic constraints on either indicative or subjunctive readings. Despite that, almost all readers, and virtually all subsequent grammarians, rejected the soundness of the subjunctive reading.

All rebuttals of the subjunctive rely on semantic (or theological) arguments. For example, ʾAbū ʿAlī al-Fārisī offered an elaborate refutation of the subjunctive inflection in this phrase by contending, among other things, that the *fa* cannot be *fa al-sababiyyah* because, if it were, you should be able to paraphrase any such sentence as if it were a conditional. So, in the sentence *iḏhab fa-uʿṭiya-ka* 'go so that I give you something', you can rephrase it sensibly as *ʾin ḏahabta ʾaʿṭaytu-ka* 'if you go, I will give you something'. However, according to al-Fārisī, since that would be rather meaningless in the phrase *kun fa-yakūn* (e.g., 'be something so that it will be something'), the *fa* here cannot be *fa al-*

sababiyyah, and thus the verb should be indicative rather than subjunctive (Nasser 2015, 93). The point for our purposes is not so much whether or not the subjunctive is semantically preferable in this instance; rather, it is (1) to show that semantic and other contextual factors could at times determine whether an indicative or subjunctive was used, despite the syntax, and (2) to demonstrate that even those well versed in the system would occasionally disagree over which inflection was more appropriate.

Other examples of intra-reader variation that were less controversial, but nevertheless involve differing semantic interpretations of a Quranic verse that resulted in indicative versus subjunctive readings include the following:

(267) وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَشْتَرِي لَهْوَ الحَدِيثِ لِيُضِلَّ عَن سَبِيلِ اللّٰهِ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ وَيَتَّخِذها هُزُوًا (Q31.6)

wa-mina n-nāsi man yaštarī lahwa l-ḥadīṯi li-yuḍilla ʿan sabīli llāhi bi-ġayri ʿilmin wa-yattaḫiḏa/u-hā huzuwan ʾulāʾika lahum ʿaḏābun muhīnun

'But there are some who employ theatrics, only to lead others away from Allah's way—without any knowledge—and to make a mockery of it. They will suffer a humiliating punishment'

Ḥafṣ, Ḥamzah, and al-Kisāʾī read *yattaḫiḏ* as subjunctive *yattaḫiḏa-hā* 'in order to make a mockery of it' (or 'thereby making a mockery of it'?), while the rest read it as indicative *yattaḫiḏu-hā* 'And they make a mockery of it'.

(268) إِن يَشَأْ يُسْكِنِ الرِّيحَ فَيَظْلَلْنَ رَوَاكِدَ عَلَى ظَهْرِهِ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِكُلِّ صَبَّارٍ شَكُورٍ. أَو يُوبِقْهُنَّ بِمَا كَسَبُوا وَيَعْفُ عَن كَثِيرٍ. وَيَعْلَمَ الَّذِينَ يُجَادِلُونَ فِي آيَاتِنَا مَا لَهُم مِن مَحِيصٍ (Q4.33–35)

[33] *ʾin yašaʾ yuskini r-rīḥa fa-yaẓlalna rawākida ʿalā ẓahri-hī ʾinna fī ḏālika la-ʾayyātin li-kulli ṣabbārin šakkūrin,* [34] *ʾaw yūbiq-hunna bi-mā kasabū wa-yaʿfu ʿan kaṯīrin,* [35] *wa-yaʿlamu/a llaḏīna yuǧādilūna fī ʾāyyātinā mā lahum min maḥīṣin*

'[33] If He wills, He can calm the wind, leaving the ships motionless on the water. Surely in this are signs for whoever is steadfast, grateful [34] Or He can wreck the ships for what the people have committed—though He forgives much—[35] so those who dispute about our signs may know that they have no refuge'

Nāfiʿ and Ibn ʿĀmir read it as an indicative *yaʿlamu* 'And those who know…', whereas all other readers read it as a subjunctive *yaʿlama* 'So that they may know…'

Such variation garnered significant attention by grammarians who wrote analyses and explanations of the different readings, often supplementing with linguistic commentary of various kinds. One of the most prolific of these scholars was Ibn Ḫālawayh (d. 980 CE/370 AH), who wrote several treatises, including *ʾIʿrāb al-Qirāʾāt al-Sabʿ wa-ʿIlalu-hā* 'The Inflection of the Seven Readings and their Causes', as well as *al-Ḥuǧǧah fī al-Qirāʾāt al-Sabʿ* 'The Evidence for the Seven Readings'. Ibn Ḫālawayh's discussion of Q42.35 is complex and more intriguing. He suggests that the indicative reading reflects a new clause, not dependent on what precedes it (*istiʾnāf*), whereas the rest who read the subjunctive interpret it as dependent on what precedes. Following

these brief comments, however, Ibn Ḫālawayh mentions that the grammarians of Baṣra and Kūfah disagree over the verb, with the former arguing it is actually/underlyingly(?) *maǧzūm* (= jussive), but made subjunctive just like the verb in:

(269) أَمْ حَسِبْتُم أَن تَدْخُلُوا الجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَعْلَمِ اللهُ الَّذِينَ جهِدُوا مِنْكُم وَيَعْلَمَ الصّبِرينَ (Q3.142)

ʾam ḥasibtum ʾan tadḫulū l-ǧannata wa-lammā yaʿlami llāhu llaḏīna ǧāhadū min-kum wa-yaʿlama l-ṣābirīna

'Do you think that you will enter Paradise without Allah proving which of you truly struggled for his cause and patiently endured?'

The Baṣrans, however, argued that the subjunctive reading is preferable and that it reflects a meaning as if there were an underlying *ʾan* present, as if the verse read: *ʾan yaʿlama llaḏīna yuǧādilūna* 'So that those who dispute will know...' (*ʾIʿrāb*, 285).

There are a number of parallels to these patterns in Vat. Ar. 13, especially when the conjunctions *fa-* and *wa-* could be interpreted as introducing either sequential acts or ones dependent, usually in a causal way, on what precedes. Note the following examples:

(270) يرسل ابن البشر ملايكته فيميزوا عن ملكوته كل الامواج وكل عاملى الاثم (21v)

yrsl ʾbn ʾl-bšr mlʾykt-h f-ymyzwʾ ʿn mlkwt-h kl ʾl-ʾmwʾǧ w-kl ʿʾmly ʾl-ʾṯm

'The Son of Man will send his angels for them to keep out of his kingdom all envy and all of the evil doers'

(271) ويثب البنون علي ابايهم فيقتلونهم (14v)
w-yṯb ʾl-bnwn ʿly ʾbʾy-hm f-yqtlwn-hm
'And sons will attack their fathers and then kill them'

(272) ولكم اعين بم انتم لا تبصرون بها فتفهموا (59v)
w-lkm ʾʿyn ṯm ʾntm lʾ tbṣrwn b-hʾ f-tfhmwʾ
'You have eyes but you will not see by them, thereby understanding'

In the first example, it is possible that only the initial verb, following *fa-*, was felt to be resultative but the rest indicative of future events. The subsequent examples offer close analogues to, e.g., Q31.6.

In a few places, Ibn Ḫālawayh notes that differences over indicative versus subjunctive inflection between readers were due to certain tendencies to prefer one or the other depending on the length of the sentence. One such instance is:

(273) وَمَا كَانَ لِبَشَرٍ أَن يُكَلِّمَهُ اللهُ إِلَّا وَحْيًا أَو مِن وَرَآءِ حِجَابٍ أَو يُرْسِل رَسُولًا فَيُوحى بِإِذْنِهِ مَا يَشَاءُ إِنَّهُ عَلِيٌّ حَكِيمٌ (Q42.51)
wa-mā kāna li-bašarin ʾan yukallima-hū llāhu ʾillā wahyan ʾaw min warāʾi ḥiǧābin ʾaw yursila/u rasūlan fa-yūḥiya/ī bi-ʾiḏnihī mā yašāʾu ʾinna-hū ʿaliyyun ḥakīmun
'It is not possible for a human being to have Allah communicate, except through inspiration, or from behind a veil, or by sending a messenger-angel to reveal whatever He wills be his permission. He is surely most high, most wise'

Nāfiʿ reads both as indicative *yursilu* and *yūḥī*, while the rest of the readers read them as subjunctive *yursila* and *yūḥiya*. Here, Ibn

Ḫālawayh argues that Nāfiʿ's Indicative reading is due to the tendency of 'the Arabs' (*al-ʿarab*) to revert to the nominative the longer and more complex the sentence.

(274) وذلك أنّ العرب إذا طال النسق خرجوا من النصب إلى الرفع (ʾIʿrāb, 279)

wa-ḏālika ʾanna al-ʿaraba ʾiḏā ṭāla al-nasaqu ḫarağū min al-naṣbi ʾilā al-rafʿi

'That [the nominative reading] is due to the fact that the Arabs, when the coordination [of elements] gets long, they leave the subjunctive (*naṣb*) for the nominative (*rafʿ*)'.

This pattern of non-indicative verbs at the beginning of a sentence, followed by indicatives the more coordinates are added, is attested in numerous places in Vat. Ar. 13 as well:

(275) وابن البشر يسلم فى ايدي عطما الكهنه والكتبه فيشجو به للموت ويسلمونه ويدفعونه الي الشعوب ويستهزيون به ويغدرونه ويبصقون في وجهه ويقتلونه (65r)

w-ʾbn ʾl-bšr yslm fy ʾydy ʿẓmʾ ʾl-khnh w-ʾl-ktbh f-yšğw b-h l-l-mwt w-yslmwn-h w-ydfʿwn-h ʾly ʾl-šʿwb w-ysthzywn b-h w-yġdrwn-h w-ybṣqwn fy wğh-h w-yqtlwn-h

'And the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and the scribes so that they can sentence him to death, and they will hand him over and give him up to the people, and they will mock him and betray him and spit in his face and then they will kill him'

We further saw above that several subordinating particles, namely *ḥattā* 'until; so that' and *ʾan* 'that', can trigger either the subjunctive or indicative in Vat. Ar. 13. Such variation after *ḥattā*

is well documented, even in descriptions of textbook Classical Arabic (e.g., Wright 1896, II: 20–21; Fischer 2002, 109, §196b1). Indeed, the semantic differences between the two usages were not always clear depending on the context, a fact which led to different interpretations of the same text. For example, there is a variant in the Quran, at Q2.214, where Warš ʿan Nāfiʿ reads حتى يقول الرسول والذين آمنوا معه as *ḥattā yaqūlu l-rasūlu wallaḏīna ʾāmanū maʿa-hū*, instead of the otherwise-ubiquitous *ḥattā yaqūla*, reflecting a shift from intentive 'so that even the messenger and the believers with him cried out' to adverbial 'until the messenger and the believers with him cried out'. Other early Christian MSS attest similar variation between indicative and non-indicative inflection after *ḥattā*, depending on syntax. Specifically, when *ḥattā* is used to express purpose, it is virtually always followed by the non-indicative, whereas when it means 'until', it can trigger either mood, as the following examples from SAr. 74 illustrate.

(276) حتي يقدروا يطغوا المختارين (SAr. 74, 53r)
ḥty yqdrwʾ yṭġwʾ ʾl-mḫtʾryn
'So that they are able (NON-INDIC) to deceive the elect'

(277) واي مدينه تدخلونها او قريه فستبحثوا من اوجبها فامكتوا حتي تخرجوا (SAr. 74, 19v)
w-ʾy mdynh tdḫlwn-hʾ ʾw qryh f-s-tbḥṯwʾ mn ʾwǧb-hʾ f-ʾmkṯwʾ ḥty tḫrǧwʾ
'And any town or village you enter, you should look for the most deserving and stay [wth them] until whenever you leave (NON-INDIC)'

(278) امين اقول لكم ان هاهنا اناس وقوف لا يذوقون الموت حتي يرون بن الانسان اتيا فى ملكه (SAr. 74, 37v)

> *ʾmyn ʾqwl l-km ʾn hʾhnʾ ʾnʾs wqwf lʾ yḏwqwn ʾl-mwt ḥty yrwn bn ʾl-ʾnsʾn ʾtyʾ fy mlk-h*
> 'Truly I tell you that there are people standing here who will not taste death until they see (INDIC) the son of man coming in his kingdom'

The distinction between the second and third examples, and therefore the reason for non-indicative versus indicative modal inflection, seems to be the specificity and certainty of the event from the perspective of the speaker. In the first, Jesus sends the disciples out and gives them instructions on what to do when they stay in various places. The verb *tḫrǧwʾ* 'you leave (NON-INDIC)' refers to a very abstract, unspecified time and event; it is rather gnomic 'whenever you might leave'. In the second example, however, the event—the coming of the son of man at the end of the present age—is a very specific, vivid event, about which the speaker, Jesus, is certain and committed. The difference here again seems to be one of speaker positionality relative to the event, its specificity, and its certainty, with verbs referring to events to which the speaker is more committed more likely to be indicative.

The important point here is not that all of the examples of non-indicatives in syntactically indicative contexts (or vice versa) attested in Vat. Ar. 13 are of the same kind as the variants attested in the *qirāʾāt*; rather, it is that while in the majority of cases the syntax alone determine which modal form would be used, the modal system was never purely syntactic. Various semantic, pragmatic, and contextual factors played a role in determining which

modal form was used, especially between the indicative and subjunctive, and led to variation in early corpora, even ones, such as the Quranic *qirāʾāt*, that are by definition included in the corpora of Classical Arabic. The kinds of variation in Vat. Ar. 13 should, therefore, be seen as well within the kinds characteristic of many, if not all, early Islamic-era corpora. However, whereas normative preferences developed among the grammarians, which led to a reduction in such variants in the grammatical tradition connected with Classical Arabic, this type of variation remained characteristic of medieval corpora, such as other Christian Arabic MSS, and continues until modern times in the Arabic dialects.

In a recent article, Stokes (2024a) conducted a data-driven analysis of the distribution of modal forms in six early translations of the Gospels into Arabic the provenances of which are thought to be the same monastic milieux (Mar Sabas and Mar Chariton, both near Jerusalem, as well as possibly southern Syria) and the dating of which is approximately the same as Vat. Ar. 13 (9th–10th centuries CE). For a comparison, see Table 50. The collection of examples from Vat. Ar. 13 in which a Non-Indicative form occurs in an Indicative context for semantic or pragmatic reasons has numerous parallels in these early Christian MSS.

Table 50: Comparison of early Christian MSS—number and percentage of indicative/non-indicative verbs and their contexts

MS	**Indic. forms in indic. contexts**	**Non-indic. forms in non-indic. contexts**
SAr. 154 (*Apology*, late 8th/early 9th CE)	89/101 (88%)	26/42 (62%)
BL 4950 (*Summa*, 867/877 CE)	60/67 (90%)	16/24 (67%)
SAr. 74 (Gospels, 9th CE)	117/266 (44%)	246/270 (91%)
Vat. Borg. Ar. 95 (Gospels, 9th/10th CE)	136/292 (47%)	290/313 (93%)

SAr. 72 (Gospels, 897 CE)	96/285 (34%)	298/312 (96%)
SAr. 71 (Gospels, 10th CE)	174/310 (56%)	189/223 (85%)
SAr. 75 (Gospels, 10th CE)	235/330 (68%)	309/338 (91%)
SAr. 70 (Gospels, 10th CE)	147/171 (86%)	300/314 (96%)
Vat. Ar. 13 (Gospels)	529/551 (96%)	206/223 (92%)

3.1.1. Non-Indicative Forms in Interrogative Clauses

(279) افلا تذكروا بالصغيره قلوبهم الجافيه عقولهم الغليظ نظرهم (BL 4950, 6v)
ʾ-f-lʾ tḏkrwʾ b-ʾl-ṣġyrh qlwb-hm ʾl-ǧʾfyh ʿqwl-hm ʾl-ġlyẓ nẓr-hm
'Do you not remember the small-hearted, the weak-minded, and the short-sighted?'

(280) قال لهم لماذا تتفكروا اشر فى قلوبكم (SAr. 72, 11r)
qʾl l-hm l-mʾḏʾ ttfkrwʾ ʾl-šr fy qlwb-km
'He said to them, "Why do you think evil in your hearts?"'

(281) فقال لهم لمادا وانتم تتعدوا وصيه الله (Vat. Borg. Ar. 95, 27r)
f-qʾl l-hm l-mʾdʾ w-ʾntm ttʿdwʾ wṣyh ʾllh
'Then he said to them, "Why do you also transgress the command of God?"'

3.1.2. Non-Indicative Forms in Negated Main Verbs

(282) وانت بيت لحيم لا تكوني حقيره فى سلطان يهود (SAr. 154, 115v)
w-ʾnt byt lḥym lʾ tkwny ḥqyrh fy slṭʾn yhwh
'And you, Bethlehem, are not least among the rulers of the Jews'

(283) ليس يفضلوه عليهم بشي... ولا يبالوا ان يدخلوا الكنايس ولا يعملون بشى مما تعمله النصارى فى كنايسهم (BL 4950, 7v)
lys yfḍlw-h ʿly-hm b-šy… w-lʾ ybʾlwʾ ʾn ydḫlwʾ ʾl-knʾys w-lʾ yʿmlwn b-šy m-mʾ tʿml-h ʾl-nṣʾry fy knʾys-hm

'They do not prefer it to them at all... and they do not care to enter the synagogues, nor do they do anything like what the Christians do in their churches'

(284) قال لهم ليس يحتاجوا الاقويا الي الطبيب ولكن المرضا (SAr. 74, 11v)
qʾl l-hm lys yḥtʾǧwʾ ʾl-ʾqwyʾ ʾly ʾl-ṭbyb w-lkn ʾl-mrḍʾ
'He said to them, "The well do not need the doctor, but rather the sick do"'

(285) لانهم يقولون ولا يفعلوا (SAr. 70, 27v)
l-ʾn-hm yqwlwn w-lʾ yfʿlwʾ
'Because they talk but do not act'

3.1.3. Non-Indicative Forms as Main Verbs with Future Semantics

(286) وساتسمعوا بحروب واخبار حروب (SAr. 72, 29r)
w-sʾtsmʿwʾ b-ḥrwb w-ʾḫbʾr ḥrwb
'And you will hear of wars and rumours of wars'

(287) والمعموديه التي اعتمد ساتعتمدوا (SAr. 72, 26v)
w-ʾl-mʿmwdyh ʾlty ʾʿtmd sʾtʿtmdwʾ
'And the baptism into which I am baptised you will also be baptised'

(288) بالدين الدي تدينوا به تدانوا (Vat. Borg. Ar. 95, 11v)
b-ʾl-dyn ʾldy tdynwʾ b-h tdʾnwʾ
'By the measure you judge, you will be judged'

3.1.4. Non-Indicative Forms in Asyndetic Relative Clause

(289) وكل شي تسلوا في صلاتكم وانتم مومنين تعطوا (SAr. 75, 21v)
w-kl šy tslwʾ fy ṣlʾt-km w-ʾntm mwmnyn tʿṭwʾ
'And anything you ask in prayer, believing, you will be given'

(290) وليس لهم شي ياكلوا (SAr. 70, 19v)
w-lys l-hm šy yʾklwʾ
'They have nothing to eat'

(291) منهم تقتلوا ومنهم تصلبوا ومنهم تجلدوا في جماعاتكم (SAr. 74, 52v)
mn-hm tqtlwʾ w-mn-hm tṣlbwʾ w-mn-hm tǧldwʾ fy ǧmʾʿʾt-km
'Some of them you kill, and some of them you crucify, and some of them you whip in your assemblies'

3.1.5. Variable Inflection: Verbs of Ability

(292) اما وجه السما فتحسنوا تقضوا (SAr. 72, 20r)
ʾmʾ wǧh ʾl-smʾ f-tḥsnwʾ tqḍwʾ
'As for the appearance of the heavens, you can (NON-INDIC) determine'

(293) واذا ما اردتم تستطيعون تحسنون اليهم (SAr. 72, 31v)
w-ʾḏʾ mʾ ʾrdtm tstṭyʿwn tḥsnwn ʾlyhm
'And whenever you want you are able (INDIC) to give alms to them'

The prevalence of such occurrences is much higher in the other early Christian MSS than in Vat. Ar. 13. Verbs in interrogative clauses, for example, were indicative across the other eight MSS shown in Table 50 between 52 percent of the time, on the high end, and 11 percent of the time, on the low end (Stokes 2024a, 379–80), whereas in Vat. Ar. 13, indicative forms still occur 91 percent of the time. Negated main verbs (with *lā*) in the six Arabic Gospel MSS are indicative in between 59 percent of cases, on the high end, and 5 percent of cases, on the low end, whereas in Vat. Ar. 13 they are indicative in 90 percent of the cases. Thus, the grammar of verbal mood in Vat. Ar. 13—at least as concerns Hands A, B, and D—sits between that of the other early Gospel

MSS, on the one hand, and the Quran/Old Ḥiǧāzī, as well as the ʿ*Arabiyyah* corpus, on the other, and is often much closer to these non-Christian corpora. Hand C patterns even more closely with the trends in the Christian corpus than these other scribal hands.

Stokes (2024a) argued that the enlarged role of semantics and speaker positionality relative to the act of the verb reflects a living development, based in no small part on the significant number of direct parallels between the patterns attested in both the early Gospel MSS and the modern dialects (Stokes 2024a, 406–10, for examples and analysis). If true, then it suggests that the composers of the other early Gospel MSS targeted a more vernacular register, whereas the scribe(s) that composed Vat. Ar. 13 intentionally targeted a system closer to that of, e.g., the Quran/Old Ḥiǧāzī/ʿ*Arabiyyah*. Another bit of evidence in favour of this interpretation is the fact that 31/39 (80 percent) of the examples of syntactically unexpected modal forms occur in direct speech, a fact that may suggest a desire on the part of the scribe(s) to license different registers for direct speech versus narrative.[6]

Indeed, modern dialects that morphologically distinguish between an indicative and subjunctive imperfective often display inter- and intra-dialectal variation in precisely the same contexts. In interrogative contexts, for example, Brustad (2000, 236) shows that while both Cairene and Damascene Arabic use the *bi-* prefix

[6] This phenomenon is perhaps responsible for some minority, perhaps colloquial, forms in the Quran (Al-Jallad 2020a, 68–69; Reynolds 2023). It is further attested in other Arabic Gospel MSS (see, e.g., Stokes, Abou-Khatwa, and Leube 2024, 824).

with indicative verbs, and omit it in subjunctive contexts, the former often uses the subjunctive in some interrogative contexts where the latter can use either (examples from Brustad 2000, 236). In Egyptian, the non-indicative is quite common.

(294) تشربي شاي؟ (Egyptian)
tišrabi šāy?
'Would you [like to] drink (NON-INDIC) some tea?'

In Syrian, both forms can occur (Brustad 2000, 236, 238).

(295) بتشربي شاي؟ (Syrian)
btišrəbi šāy?
'Would you like to drink (INDIC) some tea?'

but

(296) اعمل قهوة ولّا شاي؟ (Syrian)
ʾaʿmel ʾahweh, wəlla šāy?
'Shall I make (NON-INDIC) coffee, or tea?'

This also occurs in Moroccan dialects that make use of the *t*- prefix to mark the Indicative (Brustad 2000, 237).

(297) اوّل مرّة تنشري جلابة—تعقلي اختي، ديك الجلابة اللي شريتي لي؟ (Moroccan)
ʾuwwəl mərra tanšri ǧllāba—tʿaqəli ʾuḫti, dīk əǧ-ǧllāba lli šrītī-li?
'[it was] the first time I bought a jellaba [type of dress]—remember (NON-INDIC), sister, that jellaba you bought me?'

Brustad likewise reports that in numerous dialects with Indicative/Subjunctive distinction, the Subjunctive occurs in

clauses modifying an indefinite head, i.e., an asyndetic relative clause (Brustad 2000, 239).

(298) مستحيل هوني عندنا واحد يقبل انّه ياخد بنت ما تكون عزراء (Syrian)
mustaḥīl hōni ʿan[d]na wāḥid yiqbal ʾinnu yāḫud binət mā tkūn ʿazrāʾ
'It's impossible here for anyone to agree (NON-INDIC) to marry a girl who isn't/might not be a virgin'

(299) غادي تشوفي شي حاجة اللي ما تعجبكش (Moroccan)
ġādi tšūfi ši ḥāǧa lli ma tʿaǧb-ek ši
'You will see something that you might not like (NON-INDIC)'

The occurrence of the minority of non-indicative forms in syntactically indicative contexts in Vat. Ar. 13, as well as those in other corpora, thus likely belonged to living language and apparently constitute possible options for writing. Again, the system in Vat. Ar. 13 is much closer to the strictly syntactically determined distribution characteristic of what becomes Classical Arabic. The important point to be made here is that, even in a system that was primarily syntactic, it was possible for two different people to see the same text, interpret the semantics differently, thereby triggering indicative or subjunctive modal inflection, as we saw in the case of the Quranic readers. While either indicative or non-indicative subsequently became the preferred inflection, defended in the *ḥuǧǧah* literature, this later normativity should not be retrojected onto earlier MSS composed when variation was clearly normal.

3.2. Comparison of Long versus Short Spellings of Jussives and Imperatives of II/III-*Y/W* Roots

We have seen that there were two significant factors in the distribution of long versus short spellings of jussives/apocopates and imperatives: (1) root type, with jussives and imperatives from III-*Y/W* roots much likelier to be spelled long than forms from II-*Y/W* roots, and (2) scribal hand. The two earliest hands, Hand A and Hand B, both spell approximately 10 percent of these forms long. Hand C more than doubles that, whereas the latest hand, Hand D, spells only 1/72 long.

Long spellings are also well-known from the early corpus of Christian Arabic texts. Blau (1966–1967, 185–96; 2002, 45, §77) discusses this phenomenon and connects it to the loss of verbal mood in Islamic-era Arabic, but without any frequency or distributional description thereof.[7] Stokes (2024b) attempted to redress this by a quantitative and distributional study within and across a small corpus of Christian Arabic Gospel MSS. In it he shows that in six MSS—each of which dates to the 9th or 10th century CE—short spellings are less common than long spellings in the majority of syntactic contexts, but that root type appears

[7] Likewise, Hopkins's discussion is little more than a description of the phenomenon buttressed by a scattering of examples and vague claims that, e.g., short forms are of "decidedly less frequent occurrence" than the longer spellings (1984, 85). Further, there is no sense of whether a difference exists between the likelihood of II-*Y/W* root forms to be spelled long or short relative to III-*Y/W* ones. A close study of this phenomenon in the early papyri, and indeed the early epigraphic inscriptions, remains a desideratum.

to have been the most significant factor in determining the likelihood of short versus long spellings. Of those six MSS, 5/6 (83 percent) of the MSS attest highly significant differences between II-*Y/W* and III-*Y/W* roots, the former being much likelier than the latter to be spelled short (Stokes 2024b, 328), as here in Vat. Ar. 13. Table 51 places Vat. Ar. 13 in the context of these and other early Christian Arabic MSS, some of which I document here for the first time. Vat. Ar. 13, while more conservative than the other early Christian MSS studied so far, nevertheless attests the same distribution.

Table 51: Short out of all spellings of eligible forms by root type across early MSS

MS	**II-*Y/W***	**III-*Y/W***
SAr. 154 (late 8th/early 9th CE)	24/41 (59%)	8/22 (36%)
BL 4950 (867/877 CE)	36/45 (80%)	0/9
SAr. 74 (9th CE)	10/40 (25%)	0/26
Vat. Borg. Ar. 95 (9th/10th CE)	13/38 (34%)	2/24 (8%)
SAr. 72 (897 CE)	31/49 (63%)	6/27 (22%)
SAr. 71 (10th CE)	28/36 (78%)	2/8 (25%)
SAr. 75 (10th CE)	45/53 (85%)	11/30 (37%)
SAr. 70 (10th CE)	15/29 (52%)	7/19 (37%)
Vat. Ar. 13	58/65 (89%)	29/49 (59%)

When we contextualise this Christian data set with other evidence from the early Islamic period, it turns out that this pattern seems to have been widespread, if not ubiquitous, even among Muslims. Long spellings of III-*Y/W* roots, especially imperatives, are amply attested in early Islamic-era papyri (Hopkins 1984, 83–84, §81a; 85–86, §82d), and inscriptions, including one of the earliest and most famous building inscriptions from the

Islamic period, ʿAbd al-Malik's inscription on the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem (Kessler 1970, 6):[8]

(300) اللهم صلى على رسولك وعبدك عيسى ابن مريم
ʾllhm ṣly ʿly rswl-k w-ʿbd-k ʿysy ʾbn mrym
'Oh God, bless (LONG IMPV) your messenger and slave, Jesus, son of Mary'

In fact, the spelling of imperative **ṣalli* long is virtually ubiquitous in the early Islamic period material. For example, its use is amply attested in the epigraphic inscriptional record, of which the following inscription, likely from the late 1st or early 2nd century AH / late 7th or early 8th century CE from Ṣuwaydrah, modern Saudi Arabia, is representative (Al-Rāšid 2008, 129).

(301) اللهم صلى على القسم بن محمد
ʾllhm ṣly ʿly ʾl-qsm bn mḥmd
'Oh God, bless al-Qāsim son of Muhammad'

The spellings of II-*Y/W* roots, however, are much more frequently defective in the inscriptions. Note the following examples, also from Al-Ṣuwaydah, which are typical (Al-Rāšid 2008, 92, 94).

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[8] No long spellings of apocopate forms are attested in the Quranic consonantal text. In one place (Q63.10), an apocopate form occurs in a resultative clause headed by *wa-* where we would expect a subjunctive instead. Most readers read it *ʾakun* in accordance with the consonantal text; however, one reader, ʾAbū ʿAmr, reads it as subjunctive *ʾakūna*, in defiance of the consonantal text (Van Putten 2022, 288, n. 93).

(302) اللهم اغفر لعسى بن الحرث وكن به رحيما
ʾllhm ʾġfr l-ʿysy bn ʾl-ḥrṯ w-kn b-h rḥymʾ
'Oh God, forgive Isa son of al-Ḥāriṯ, and be (SHORT IMPV) merciful to him'

(303) اللهم تب على اسمعيل بن زيد توبه نصوحا
ʾllhm tb ʿly ʾsmʿyl bn zyd twbh nṣwḥʾ
'Oh God, forgive Ismail son of Zayd a sincere repentance'

Returning to the Christian data, II-*Y/W* versus III-*Y/W* imperative forms witness the same trend (see Table 52). The Christian MSS thus fit into a larger set of developments wherein II-*Y/W* roots retained the morphological distinction between apocopate and non-apocopate (or were at least spelled thus) longer than III-*Y/W* roots did.

Table 52: Short spellings of 2MSG imperatives by root type[9]

MS	**II-*Y/W***	**III-*Y/W***
SAr. 154	3/3 (100%)	2/3 (67%)
BL 4950	4/5 (80%)	—
SAr. 74	8/17 (47%)	0/18
Vat. Borg. Ar. 95	8/14 (57%)	3/20 (15%)
SAr. 72	9/16 (56%)	4/22 (18%)
SAr. 71	4/5 (80%)	0/5
SAr. 75	16/16 (100%)	11/24 (46%)
SAr. 70	5/8 (63%)	7/16 (44%)
Vat. Ar. 13	12/14 (86%)	19/28 (68%)

[9] The data for each of the MSS is based on tallies I have made directly from the MSS for the purposes of this study. In all MSS other than Vat. Ar. 13, eligible forms were collected from the first 25 percent of each MS.

Vat. Ar. 13 patterns with the other early MSS in another way, namely in the tendency to write jussives in the *(fa)-li* syntagm universally short, but with jussives after *lam* variably short or long (see Table 53, overleaf). Given the fairly wide range in percentages of short spellings in *lam* + jussive contexts across these MSS (35–80 percent in those MSS which attest both syntagms), the fact that in every case all instances of *(fa-)li* + jussives are spelled short is clearly of significance.

Table 53: Short spellings of jussives according to syntagm across MSS

MS	***(fa-)li***	**After *lam***
SAr. 154	—	19/45 (42%)
BL 4950	—	32/49 (65%)
SAr. 74	—	2/28 (7%)
Vat. Borg. Ar. 95	—	4/27 (15%)
SAr. 72	6/6 (100%)	14/32 (45%)
SAr. 71	2/2 (100%)	21/30 (70%)
SAr. 75	3/3 (100%)	22/33 (67%)
SAr. 70	3/3 (100%)	7/20 (35%)
Vat. Ar. 13	16/16 (100%)	40/50 (80%)

We might therefore imagine that the levelling of the morphological form with the long vowels in II-*Y/W* and III-*Y/W* roots proceeded in two vectors, one morphological, affecting III-*Y/W* roots more quickly and totally than II-*Y/W* roots, and one syntactic, affecting *lam* + jussives earlier than other contexts.

This broad pattern, attested across the Levant and Western Arabia in both textual and epigraphic data, is noteworthy and requires some explanation. This tradition of the writing of early Arabic across mediums clearly does not replicate Quranic orthography, where short spellings are ubiquitous. I am further unaware of any early Quranic MSS in which such alternations are attested. It thus appears that there was no prohibition against updating

the spellings of certain forms, likely reflecting evolution in contemporary spoken varieties of Arabic, when producing non-Quranic MSS, at least in the initial centuries of the Islamic era. That does not mean, of course, that the Quranic orthography—which would eventually become the norm in professional contexts, in addition to literary ones—was not already used, and was perhaps indeed associated with certain genres or especially prestigious in certain circles. But it is to suggest that the practice of updated writing attested in the various sources was not restricted to Christians, and, based on its usage in the inscription on the Dome of the Rock, was apparently not stigmatised in such contexts.

CHAPTER 7. MORPHOSYNTAX: GENDER AND NUMBER AGREEMENT

Gender and number agreement in Arabic is perhaps best known for two phenomena, both of which can be considered a kind of 'deflected agreement': (1) when inanimate plural nouns trigger FSG and (2) when verbs preceding their nominal subjects display gender but not number agreement, being obligatorily singular (Ferguson 1989). While both (1) and (2) are regular features of what becomes normative Classical Arabic, and indeed are obligatory in Modern Standard Arabic, multiple studies have shown that the Classical language is in this (and other) ways the odd variety out. For example, Hanitsch's studies (2021; 2022; 2023; 2024) have demonstrated that the Quranic pattern is much more varied, with plural nouns triggering MSG, FSG and PL agreement, depending on a number of semantic factors, such as animacy and saliency, and syntactic factors, such as distance from the head noun and pre- versus post-nominal position. Bettega and D'Anna's tome (2023) integrates the Quranic system with data from pre- and early Islamic poetry, along with descriptions by the grammarians, to argue that the Classical innovations mentioned above began in the early Islamic period and rapidly took hold in literary circles, possibly based on L1 transfer from Persian or Greek. They add ample data from modern dialects, further corroborating studies by, among others, Kirk Belnap (1991; 1993; 1999), and Belnap and Gee (1994), as well as Kristen Brustad (2000), who show that the modern dialects exhibit a more varied

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pattern of agreement, in which plural nouns can trigger either singular or plural agreement, depending on many of the same factors they (and Hanitsch for the Quran) identify in the earliest available pre-modern corpora. Stokes (2024c) is the first study of a corpus of texts produced by Christians in the monasteries of southern Palestine that quantifies agreement patterns in six translations of the Gospels and an original composition, and finds the same sets of factors at play, though with perhaps some evidence for nascent interaction with the animacy-based system that becomes ubiquitous in Classical Arabic literary contexts. At the risk of oversimplifying, it appears that virtually all non-Classical corpora heretofore examined—ancient and modern—evince an agreement system based on a number of semantic factors, including not only animacy, but individuation/saliency, as well as syntactic ones.

This chapter is first and foremost dedicated to determining what patterns of agreement are attested in the Gospel portions of Vat. Ar. 13, and whether they pattern with non-Classical corpora, Classical Arabic, or somewhere in between. The focus will be on agreement with plural nouns, since agreement with singular nouns is unremarkable. To study this phenomenon, I have documented every plural noun, as well as collective nouns, modified by any of the following modifiers: verbs, adjectives (attributive or predicative), personal pronouns, relative pronouns, and demonstrative pronouns. Each modifier was classified as pre- or post-nominal. The patterns of pre- versus post-nominal agreement differ, as we will see. Following the practice of recent schol-

arship, I refer throughout to the head noun with the term *controller*, and any modifier with the term *target*. We begin with post-controller variation (§1.0), focusing on instances of FSG agreement with plural controllers (§1.1), followed by MSG agreement with plural controllers (§1.2). We will then look at occurrences of dual (§1.3) and FPL agreement (§1.4), determining to what degree they were still functional and distinct categories, and what, if any, factors were at play in determining their usage. Lastly, we look at the minority of cases where post-controller targets with nonhuman animate and inanimate controllers trigger MPL agreement (§1.5). The second macro-section is dedicated to looking at patterns in pre-controller target agreement (§2.0).

1.0. Post-Controller Agreement

I have chosen to begin with post-controller data. This is primarily because there are significantly more post-controller targets than pre-controller targets, and there is indeed more variation in the various categories than with pre-controller targets. This is one reason why Bettega and D'Anna (2023, 147) argue that the post-controller order can and should be considered more canonical in Arabic.

1.1. Feminine Singular Target Agreement with Plural Controllers

Singular target agreement with plural controllers is a phenomenon attested in our earliest Arabic corpora, and remains a feature of all attested varieties of Arabic, pre-modern and modern, and Vat. Ar. 13 is no exception. As elsewhere, it is helpful in the case

of Vat. Ar. 13 to distinguish between FSG and MSG target agreement. While this mostly affects the target category of adjectives, I have decided to dedicate a separate section (§1.2) to address MSG agreement with plural controllers. FSG target agreement with plural controllers is, of course, well-known and common across attested varieties of Arabic, pre-modern and modern, and Vat. Ar. 13 is no exception.

(304) انت عارف بالوصايا المنزله (64r)
ʾnt ʿʾrf b-ʾl-wṣʾy ʾl-mnzlh
'You know the revealed (FSG) commandments (BPL)'

(305) نعم يا سيدي والكلاب ايضا تاكل من الكسر التى سقط عن موايد اربابها فتحيا (25v)
nʿm yʾ syd-y w-ʾl-klʾb ʾyḍʾ tʾkl mn ʾl-ksr ʾlty tsqṭ ʿn mwʾyd ʾrbʾb-hʾ f-tḥyʾ
'Yes, my lord, but even dogs (BPL) eat (FSG) from the scraps that fall from their (FSG) masters' tables, and thereby live (FSG)'

(306) وكانت الشياطين ايضا تحرج من كثير منهم اذ كانت تصرخ وتهتف وتقول انك انت المسيح ابن الله (77r)
w-kʾnt ʾl-šyʾṭyn ʾyḍʾ tḫrǧ mn kṯyr mn-hm ʾḏ kʾnt tṣrḫ w-thtf w-tqwl ʾn-k ʾnt ʾl-msyḥ ʾbn ʾllh
'And the demons were also being driven out (FSG) from many, then they were (FSG) screaming (FSG) and crying out (FSG) and saying (FSG), "Indeed, you are the Messiah, the son of God"'

This section attempts to identify the most important factors involved in determining the use of FSG instead of plural agreement with any particular plural controller.

In Vat. Ar. 13, the two most important factors in determining FSG versus plural target agreement are (1) animacy of the controller and (2) type of target. In order to investigate the impact of animacy, I grouped the types of controllers that are modified by a target and plotted them along the 'Animacy Hierarchy', which was first applied to a corpus of Cairene Arabic in Belnap (1999), and articulated relying on crosslinguistic evidence by Corbett (2006). At the high end of the hierarchy are humans, followed by collective nouns that refer to a group of humans, then divine beings, animals, and at the low end, inanimates. I have also found it meaningful to distinguish another group of nouns, often, and so here, referred to as 'human collective' nouns. These include the following: *ʾahl* 'people'; *qawm* 'people'; *šaʿb / šuʿūb* 'people(s)'; *nās* 'people'; *niswah* 'women'; *raḥṭ* 'a group'; *ǧamʿ / ǧumūʿ* 'masses, crowds'; *maḥfal / maḥāfil* 'masses, crowds'; *kaṯīr* 'many people'; and *baʿḍ* 'some people'. Target type was relatively straightforward to investigate, with targets classified as adjective, pronoun (personal, relative, demonstrative), or verb. As can be seen in Table 54, the lower on the animacy hierarchy the controller is, the likelier it is to trigger FSG agreement.

Table 54: Singular versus plural agreement patterns by animacy type

Controller Type	**FSG**	**MSG**	**DU/PL**	**Totals**
Human PL	5 (1%)	12 (2%)	493 (97%)	510
Human COLL	28 (7.5%)	28 (7.5%)	308 (85%)	364
Divine PL	23 (52%)	—	21 (48%)	44
Animal PL	35 (85%)	—	6 (15%)	41
Inanimate PL	223 (85%)	4 (1%)	36 (14%)	263

When we look at the pattern by target type, the trend across the MS is that, when all controllers are considered together, adjectives are likelier to attest FSG agreement than pronouns, which are in turn likelier than verbs (adjective > pronoun > verb).

Table 55: Post-controller FSG agreement with plural controllers by target type, whole MS

	Adjective	**Pronoun**	**Verb**
Totals	103/208 (50%)	92/352 (26%)	88/616 (14%)

We can thus say that adjectives modifying plural inanimate controllers are most likely to attest FSG agreement.

Of course, the matter is not quite so simple. These two factors are not independent of each other, and indeed interact in an interesting and significant way. While it is true that, when target type is investigated independently of animacy, the order in terms of likelihood of attesting FSG agreement with plural controllers is adjective > pronoun > verb, when animacy of the controller and type of target are considered together, we find that the ranking of likelihood based on target type changes depending on the animacy of the controller.

Table 56: FSG agreement with plural controllers based on animacy and target type, whole MS

Controller	**Adjective**		**Pronoun**	**Verb**	**Relative Pronoun**
	FSG	**FSG + broken plural**			
Human PL	2/46 (4%)	8/46 (17%)	0/128	3/313 (1%)	0/10
Human COLL	12/25 (48%)	15/25 (60%)	2/109 (2%)	13/213 (6%)	1/10 (10%)
Divine PL	9/16 (56%)	12/16 (75%)	2/7 (29%)	12/21 (57%)	—
Animal PL	5/6 (83%)	6/6 (100%)	7/12 (58%)	16/16 100%)	7/7 (100%)
Inanimate PL	75/89 (84%)	83/89 (93%)	78/94 (83%)	42/52 (81%)	23/27 (85%)

What emerges is a significant difference in target order between animate nouns, including collectives, on the one hand, and inanimate controllers on the other. For the human/human collective group, after adjectives, verbs are more likely to attest FSG agreement than pronouns (adjective > verb > pronoun). Divine and animal controllers seem to occupy a middle position, with adjectives and verbs equally likely to trigger FSG agreement, but both more likely than pronouns (adjective ~ verb > pronoun). However, with inanimate controllers, the frequency of FSG target agreement is approximately the same regardless of target type. In other words, while target type is an important factor for animate nouns, whether human, divine, or animal, it is much less so for inanimate controllers, where animacy appears to be the primary factor in triggering FSG instead of plural agreement.

The conclusion that targets modifying controllers on the low end of the animacy hierarchy almost always attest FSG agreement, regardless of target type, is further supported by looking at the few apparent counterexamples to this trend. The only counterexamples to non-FSG target agreement with inanimate controllers are typically dual:

(307) اليس قد يباع عصفوران {ب}ثمن او بعقد معروف وليس يسقط واحد منهما دون امر ابيكم الذي فى السما (15r)

ʾ-lys qd ybʿ ʿṣfwrʾn {b}-ṯmn ʾw b-ʿqd mʿrwf w-lys ysqṭ wʾḥd mn-hmʾ dwn ʾmr ʾby-km ʾlḏy fy ʾl-smʾ

'Can two birds not be sold for a certain price or by a known contract, but not one them (DU) will fall without the command of your father who is in heaven'

(308) ولكن يلقا الخمر الحديثه في زقاق جدد ويحفظان جميعا (79r)
w-lkn ylqʾ ʾl-ḫmr ʾl-ḥdyṯh fy zqʾq ǧdd w-yḥfẓʾn ǧmyʿʾ
'Rather the new wine is put in new wineskins so they are both (DU) preserved altogether'

(309) فلما اتو ملوا من السمك السفيسن جمعا حتى كادتا ان بغرقا وترسيا (77v)
f-lmʾ ʾtw mlwʾ mn ʾl-smk ʾl-sfyntyn ǧmʿʾ ḥty kʾdtʾ ʾn ṯġrqʾ w-trsyʾ
'So when they came, they filled the two boats with fish, to the point that they (DU) were about to sink (DU) and were anchored (DU)'

The few instances of non-FSG relative pronoun agreement are MSG, a pattern known from other corpora (see below, §3.0), as in the following example from Hand C:

(310) اجعلوا الان الاثمار الدي توافق التوبه ولا تطنوا وتقولوا في انفسكم ان ابانا ابرهيم (2v)
ʾǧʿlwʾ ʾl-ʾn ʾl-ʾṯmʾr ʾldy twʾfq ʾl-twbh w-lʾ tẓnwʾ w-lʾ tqwlwʾ fy ʾnfs-km ʾn ʾbʾ-nʾ ʾbrhym
'Now produce the fruit (BPL) that (MSG) is appropriate (FSG) for repentance, and do not think and say to yourselves that we have Abraham as our father'

The lone example of FPL agreement with an inanimate controller is one instance FPL verbal agreement modifying the controller *ʾamwāǧ* 'waves', which occurs in a portion of the MS produced by Hand A.

(311) وكانت الامواج ترجنها لان الريح كانت عليها (23v)
w-kʾnt ʾl-ʾmwʾǧ trǧn-hʾ l-ʾn ʾl-ryḥ kʾnt ʿly-hʾ
'And the waves were tossing (FPL) it [the ship] because the wind was hard against it'

In this instance, the saliency of the waves in the narrative was sufficiently high to trigger FPL verbal agreement. As we will see below, saliency and individuation play a role in triggering either FSG or plural agreement with nouns higher up the animacy hierarchy. However, again, in the case of the lowest categories on the hierarchy, animals and inanimate controllers, animacy appears to be the primary consideration (for a similar conclusion based on data from the Quran, see Hanitsch 2022).

The impact of textual saliency and individuation is more significant with nouns higher on the animacy hierarchy. FSG agreement with such controllers is often in contexts in which the controller is viewed as an unindividuated whole, whereas plural agreement occurs in contexts where the same controller is more highly salient or individuated. Bettega and D'Anna (2023, 180 *et passim*) indicate the semantics of FSG as [−individuated]/[−saliency] and the plural as [+individuated]/[+saliency]. Khan (1988, 469–70) provides an important discussion of various semantic and pragmatic features that serve to increase the individuation and/or saliency of a noun, including definiteness (versus indefiniteness), specificity (versus abstractness), concreteness (versus abstractness), humanness (animacy), and textual prominence (versus being textually incidental). The latter seems to be especially significant in the choice of FSG versus plural target agreement. In the following pair of examples, the same noun, *ʾanbiyāʾ* 'prophets' triggers FSG and plural agreement, respectively.

(312) هاكذا فعلت اباوكم بالانبيا الماضيه قبلكم (80v)
hʾkḏʾ fʿlt ʾbʾw-km b-ʾl-ʾnbyʾ ʾl-mʾḍyh qbl-km
'Your ancestors did the same thing to the prophets who came (FSG) before you'

but

(313) احذروا الانبيآ الكذبه الذين ياتونكم (8v)
ʾḥḏrwʾ ʾl-ʾnbyāʾ ʾl-kḏbh ʾlḏyn yʾtwn-km
'Beware the false prophets who (PL) come (PL) to you...'

In the first example, *ʾanbiyāʾ* refers to all of the prophets that had come before the present generation. No particular prophet, or even group of prophets, is in view. The degree of individuation is quite low, thus the controller is [−individuated]. In the second, however, a specific group—false prophets to come, presumably at the end times—is in view. This increase in the individuation, or perhaps more accurately here, in specificity, of the referent is likely responsible for the plural agreement. The controller can thus be thought of as [+individuated].

Other sets of examples in which the same controller triggers either FSG and plural agreement in ways that also seem best explained as aligning with the degree of individuation and saliency in the narrative can be adduced. The following pair of verses feature the same controllers, this time *katabah wa-ʾaḥbār* 'scribes and Pharisees', triggering either FSG or plural agreement:

(314) فجعلت الكتبه والاحبار تتراطن وتقول لارداية ما بالكم تاكلون مع العشار والخطاه (78v)
f-ǧʿlt ʾl-ktbh w-ʾl-ʾḥbʾr ttrʾṭn w-tqwl l-ʾrdʾy-h mʾ bʾl-km tʾklwn mʿ ʾl-ʿšʾr w-ʾl-ḫṭʾh

> 'Then the scribes and Pharisees began talking amongst themselves and said (FSG) to his disciples, "Why do you eat with tax collectors and sinners?"'

but

(315) فبدت الكتبه والاحبار يقولون فيما بينهم (78r)
f-bdt ʾl-ktbh w-ʾl-ʾḥbʾr yqwlwn fymʾ byn-hm
'Then the scribes and Pharisees began saying (MPL) amongst themselves...'

In the first example, the focus is not on the scribes and Pharisees; rather, the whole point of the pericope is to provide an opportunity to highlight the difference between Jesus and his disciples, who eat with tax collectors and sinners, and the other Jewish groups who do not. They are, in other words, relatively incidental to the narrative. This is likely why FSG agreement occurs throughout here. In the second text, however, the narrative focuses on the activities of the scribes and Pharisees, whose activities are integral to advancing the narrative, and providing a contrast to the actions of Jesus and his disciples, thereby triggering plural target agreement.

Several examples of this semantic distinction between low saliency/individuation and FSG agreement on the one hand, and high individuation and plural agreement, with divine controllers can also be adduced. In the following examples, the same controller, *malāʾikah* 'angels' triggers either FSG or plural agreement. In addition to textual prominence, the contrast can here also be thought of as one of collectivity versus heterogeneity/particularity (Cowell 1964, 423, *apud* Brustad 2000, 23):

(316) لانه مكتوب انه يوصي بك ملايكته فتحملك علي سواعدها (3r)
l-ʾn-h mktwb ʾn-h ywṣy b-k mlʾkt-h f-tḥml-k ʿly swʾʿd-hʾ
'For it is written that he will command his angels concerning you, then they will carry (FSG) you in their (FSG) arms'

but

(317) كذلك يكون فى منهى العالم نخرج الملايكه يميزون بين الحيار والشرار
وبلقون السرار فى اخدود من نار (22r)
kḏlk ykwn fy mnthy ʾl-ʿʾlm yḫrǧ ʾl-mlʾykh ymyzwn byn ʾl-ḫyʾr w-ʾl-šrʾr w-ylqwn ʾl-šrʾr fy ʾḫdwd mn nʾr
'It will be like this at the end of the age. The angels will go out and distinguish (MPL) between the good and the evil, and they will cast (MPL) the evil into a pit of fire'

In the first cited text, the angels are viewed as a collective; the narrative focus is on Jesus, not the angels. In the second verse, however, the angels are in focus as the agents of the climax of the narrative, namely the separation of the good and evil at the final judgement. The FSG target agreement in the first fits the semantic [−individuation] pattern, whereas the second triggers an expected plural to indicate [+individuation].

Once more, the same distinction between collectivity versus particularity can trigger FSG versus plural agreement with human collective controllers as well. Note the following pair, both of which feature the collective noun *šaʿb* 'people', once with FSG and another with plural agreement.

(318) ستنتزع منكم ملكوت الله وتصير الى شعب تثمر ثمارا صالحه (36v)
s-tntzʿ mn-km mlkwt ʾllh w-tṣyr ʾly šʿb tṯmr ṯmʾrʾ ṣʾlḥh
'The kingdom will be taken from you and given to a people who produces (FSG) righteous fruit'

but

(319) كانَت للعامل عاده ان يطلق للشعبِ رجُلًا اسيرًا في العِيْد ممّن ارادُوا اطلاقه طلبوا اليهِ فيهِ (50r)

kʾnat l-l-ʿʾml ʿʾdh ʾn yṭlq l-l-šʿbi rjulan ʾsyran fy ʾl-ʿiyd m-mn ʾrʾduwʾ ʾṭlʾq-h ṭlbwʾ ʾily-hi fyhi

'The ruler [Pilate] had a custom of releasing to the people a prisoner during the festival [of Passover] whom they (MPL) wanted released, whom they requested (MPL) from him'

In the first verse, another *šaʿb* 'people' is mentioned, but it is not known nor specified what people; the important point is that another *šaʿb* can be found. In the second one, however, a specific *šaʿb* in a specific context—the crowd present in Jerusalem at Passover—is foregrounded. To use Dror's framework, the collective in the first example is viewed more holistically, whereas the second is distributive (2016, 104). Returning to Khan's clines of individuation, the *šaʿb* in the first example is non-specific/generic, whereas the second is more specific.

While the focus here so far has been only on FSG target agreement, Bettega and D'Anna (2023, 156–63) argue that, in the corpora they study, broken plural versus sound plural agreement in adjectives contrast in the same way that FSG versus sound plural agreement does. That is, for adjective targets, both FSG and broken plural convey [−individuation]/[−saliency], but sound plural conveys [+individuation]/[+saliency]. Stokes (2024c) provided data that suggest the same patterns hold for the other early Arabic Gospel MSS from the monasteries of south Palestine.

Whether the same contrast is evident in Vat. Ar. 13, however, is unclear. The strongest data in favour of categorising FSG

and broken plural together is actually the significant increase in FSG target agreement with broken plural controllers. Controllers that are broken plural trigger FSG target agreement much more frequently than dual or sound plural controllers do. In the presentation of the table in Table 57 below, I have included dual along with sound FPL and MPL because, as we will see below (§1.4), dual can trigger both dual and plural agreement patterns in Vat. Ar. 13, (although removing them does not change the pattern or its statistical significance).

Table 57: FSG target agreement by nominal plural type

	Broken Plural	**DU/FPL/MPL**
FSG Agreement	255/552 (46%)	16/313 (5%)
Significance (Fisher's exact test) p = <.00001		

Despite the clear significance of this trend, a relationship with regard to FSG and BPL target agreement is not easily demonstrated by minimal pairs, examples in which the same plural noun occurs—in one triggering broken plural and in the other plural agreement—where the semantics seem to reflect this [+/−individuation] / [+/−saliency]. In fact, broken plural target agreement often occurs alongside either FSG and MPL target agreement, with no apparent distinctions. Note the following examples.

1.1.1. Broken Plural + MPL

(320) (45r) اذا جا ابن البسر في مجده وجميع ملايكته الاطهار المقدسين معه
ʾḏ̱ʾ ǧʾ ʾbn ʾl-bšr fy mǧd-h w-ǧmyʿ mlʾykt-h ʾl-ʾṭhʾr ʾl-mqdsyn mʿ-h
'When the son of man comes in his glory, and all of his pure (BPL) and holy (MPL) angels are with him'

(321) فبينا هما يطلقان قال لهما قوم كانوا وقوفا ماذا يصنعان ولم تطلقان العفو (66r)
f-bynʾ hmʾ yṭlqʾn qʾl l-hmʾ qwm kʾnwʾ wqwfʾ mʾḏʾ yṣnʿʾn w-lm tṭlqʾn ʾl-ʿfw
'Then while they were untying [the foal], a group of people who were (MPL) standing (BPL) nearby said to them (DU), "What are you doing? And why are you untying the foal?"'

1.1.2. Broken Plural + FSG

(322) فدنا صاحب الخمسه القناطر فرفع ارباحها خمسه اخر (44v)
f-dnʾ ṣʾḥb ʾl-ḫmsh ʾl-qnʾṭyr f-rfʿ ʾrbʾḥ-hʾ ḫmsh ʾḫr
'Then the one with five silver talents came and brought five others (BPL) he gained from them (FSG) as interest'

(323) وكل من ينقص وصيه واحده من هذه الوصايا الصغار (4v)
w-kl mn ynqṣ wṣyh wʾḥdh mn hḏh ʾl-wṣʾyʾ ʾl-ṣġʾr
'And whoever loosens just one of these (FSG) minor (BPL) commandments...'

In the first two examples, broken plural agreement co-occurs with plural agreement, whereas in the second two it co-occurs with FSG agreement. Perhaps it is most accurate to say, then, that broken plural agreement is unmarked for individuation/saliency in Vat. Ar. 13, whereas FSG agreement is marked for [−individuation]/[−saliency] and sound plural agreement is [+individuation]/[+saliency]. That said, I included broken plural data in the tables above in order to facilitate comparisons with the data presented in Bettega and D'Anna (2023), and given the evidence for nominal broken plural forms triggering FSG agreement.

In addition to the semantic factor of individuation/saliency, one syntactic factor—distance of the target from the controller—interacts with agreement. Specifically, targets farther from the controller are likelier to attest plural over FSG (or dual) agreement compared with targets closer to the controller. In the following examples, FSG and dual target agreement is more likely to switch to plural the farther from the controller the targets are.

(324) وكان اهل المحفل باسره يطلبون قربه والدنوا اليه (80v)
w-kʾn ʾhl ʾl-mḥfl b-ʾsr-h yṭlbwn qrb-h w-ʾl-dnwʾ ʾily-h
'And the assembled crowd in its entirety was asking (PL) to come close to him'

(325) لو كان بصور وصيدان العجايب والايات التي كانت فيكما او لو كانت القوى الى كانت فيكن فى صور وصيدان اذن لباب اهلها بافتراش المسوح والرماد (84v)
lw kʾn b-ṣwr w-ṣydʾn ʾl-ʿǧʾyb w-ʾl-ʾyʾt ʾlty kʾnt fy-kmʾ ʾw lw kʾnt ʾl-qwy ʾlty kʾnt fy-kn fy ṣwr w-ṣydʾn ʾḏn l-tʾb ʾhl-hʾ f-ʾftrʾš w-ʾl-rmʾd
'If the miracles and signs that have happened among you (DU) had happened in Tyre and Sidon, or if the powers that are among you (PL) had been in Tyre and Sidon, then their people would have repented with sackcloth and ashes...'

(326) كما هو مكتوب ان هذا الشعب انما يكرمنى بسفتيه فاما قلوبهم فهى منترحه عنى بعيده من عبادتى وانما ينسكون لي باطلا لانهم يعلمون اعلام الناس ووصاياهم ويخالفون امرى ووصيتى(86v)
kmʾ hw mktwb ʾn hḏʾ ʾl-šʿb ʾnmʾ ykrm-ny b-šfty-h f-ʾmʾ qlwb-hm f-hy mntzḥh ʿn-y bʿydh mn ʿbʾdt-y w-ʾnmʾ ynskwn l-y bʾṭlʾ l-ʾn-hm yʿlmwn ʾʿlʾm ʾl-nʾs w-wṣʾyʾ-hm w-yḫʾlfwn ʾmr-y w-wṣyt-y

'As it is written, "This people, while they (SG) honour me with its (SG) lips, their (PL) hearts are far from me and from worship of me. They are devoted to me (PL) in vain, because they (PL) know the teachings of men and their commandments, but they (PL) transgress my order and my command"'

(327) فراى جماعات كبيره فرحمهم وشفا امراضهم (23r)
f-rʾy ǧmʾʿʿt kṯyrh f-rḥm-hm w-šfʾ ʾmrʾḍ-hm
'And he saw a multitudinous crowd (FSG), and he had compassion on them (PL) and healed their (PL) sicknesses'

As we will see below (§3.1), this is well-attested in other corpora as well.

Finally, the presence of certain quantifiers, such as *kull*, *ǧamīʿ*, and *bi-ʾasri* + pronoun ('each, every; all; the whole') significantly increases the likelihood that singular agreement will occur with plural controllers. The results are shown in Table 58. Note that I removed have broken plural targets from consideration because of their nebulous status when it comes to individuation. For the purposes of understanding the effect on this particular feature, I counted dual as an example of plural target agreement. Thus, singular = MSG and FSG and plural = MDU, FDU, MPL, and FPL.

Table 58: The effect of quantifiers on occurrence of singular versus plural target agreement with plural controllers

	+Quantifier	**−Quantifier**
FSG Target/Total	115/274 (42%)	246/938 (26%)
Significance (Fisher's exact test) p = <.00001		

The following pair of texts, both featuring the noun *maḥāfil*, are illustrative.

(328) فعجبت المحافل باسرها وقالت لعل هذا هو ابن داود (18r)
f-ʿǧbt ʾl-mḥʾfl b-ʾsr-hʾ w-qʾlt lʿl ḫdʾ hw ʾbn dʾwd
'And the crowds were amazed in their (FSG) entirety and said (FSG), "Maybe this is the Son of David"'

but

(329) فخرج ايسوع فطر الي محافل كثيره فرف لهم ورحمهم لابهم كانوا يسبهون البهم البى لا راعى لها (84v)
f-ḫrǧ ʾysw' f-nẓr ʾly mḥʾfl kṯyrh f-rf l-hm w-rḥm-hm l-ʾn-hm kʾnwʾ yšbhwn ʾl-bhm ʾlty lʾ rʾʿy l-hʾ
'Then Jesus left and saw many (FSG) crowds, and he had compassion on them (PL) because they (PL) were (PL) resembling (PL) the livestock that lack a shepherd'

This pattern is presumably because such quantifiers tend to emphasise the collective whole, which, as we have seen, is a semantic property associated with FSG agreement.

In summary, FSG target agreement with plural controllers is most strongly associated with animacy, although FSG agreement with inanimates is not (yet) total or obligatory. Semantically, FSG agreement appears to carry a meaning of [−individuation]/[−saliency], whereas sound plural agreement is associated with [+individuation]/[+saliency]. Syntactically, distance from the controller was seen to increase the likelihood of plural agreement over FSG or dual agreement. Finally, the presence of quantifiers, especially those that construe the plural controller as a whole, increased the likelihood that FSG agreement would be used instead of plural agreement. Across these factors, target type interacts with agreement pattern, such that adjectives were generally

likelier than other types to attest FSG agreement, followed by pronouns, with verbs least likely to attest FSG agreement, though this also depends on animacy. Interestingly, the factors identified above as conditioning FSG agreement with plural controllers are not the same as those involved with MSG target agreement, to a discussion of which we now turn, before considering dual and plural target agreement patterns.

1.2. Masculine Singular Target Agreement with Collective and Plural Controllers

While the most common kind of post-controller singular target agreement with plural controllers by far is FSG, MSG agreement is not rare. Adjectives are the most common target type to attest MSG agreement. The distribution of MSG agreement by target type and controllers by animacy is presented in Table 59.

Table 59: MSG target agreement by target type and controller animacy

Controller	ADJ	RELPN	PN	Verb	Totals
Human PL	10	—	—	2	12
Human COLL	15	1	5	8	29
Inanimate PL	—	3	1	—	4
Totals	25	4	6	10	45

The examples of MSG agreement with inanimate controllers are mostly relative pronouns; otherwise, MSG agreement is a characteristic of agreement with human controllers, both plural and collective.

More than half of all MSG targets with human controllers are adjective targets, all but one of which (24/25) are of the *faʿīl* pattern, which, along with *faʿūl*, are often MSG, regardless of the

gender of the target, even in corpora that are universally considered Classical Arabic, e.g, رجال (نساء) كثير *rijālun (nisāʾun) kaṯīrun* 'many men (women)' (Fischer 2002, 75, §120.1). Actually, these MSG *faʿīl* adjectives account for all but two of the MSG targets with human plural controllers; the remaining two are examples of generalised 3MSG inflection of *laysa*.

1.2.1. *faʿīl*

(330) ان الحصاد كثير والفعله قليل (13v)
ʾn ʾl-ḥsʾd kṯyr w-ʾl-fʿlh qlyl
'The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few'

(331) وكان هناك نسوةٌ كثير واقفات (48v)
w-kʾn hnʾk nswtun kṯyr wʾqfʾt
'And there were many women standing there'

1.2.2. *laysa*

(332) وليدع الرحل اباه وامه وبلحق بزوجته وبكونان كلاهما جسدا واحدا فليس هما الان باسين بل هما جسد واحد (63v)
w-l-ydʿ ʾl-rğl ʾbʾ-h w-ʾm-h w-ylḥq b-zwğt-h w-ykwnʾn klʾ-hmʾ ğsdʾ wʾḥdʾ f-lys hmʾ ʾl-ʾn nʾsyn bl hmʾ ğsd wʾḥd
'Then let the husband leave his father and his mother and join with his wife, then they will be together one body, and they are no longer two people, but they are one body'

(333) لان الاموات اذا انبعثوا ليس يترجون النسا ولا النسا ايصا يترجون الرجال بل هم فى السما كملايكه الله (68v)
l-ʾn ʾl-ʾmwʾt ʾḏʾ ʾnbʿṯwʾ lys ytzğwn ʾl-nsʾ w-lʾ ʾl-nsʾ ʾyḍʾ ytzğwn ʾl-rğʾl bl hm fy ʾl-smʾ k-mlʾykh ʾllh

> 'Because the dead, when they are resurrected, they do not marry women, nor do women marry men; rather, they are in heaven like God's angels'

While a generalised MSG inflection of *laysa* and *kāna* is well-attested in various corpora (§3.0 below), in the first example of *laysa* here, it is possible that it functions as a sentential negator of what follows (see Ch. 8, §1.0 for more discussion). If the latter is how the verse was intended, then it would not count as a post-controller target. However, given its context in the middle of the verse, and following the dual verb *yakūnān*, I have included it as an example here.

Human collective nouns are often morphologically MSG and, by definition, reflect a corporal, non-individuated meaning. Thus MSG with collectives is more common across target types. Agreement with human collectives in Vat. Ar. 13 is thus frequently syntactic, rather than semantic. So, if the noun is MSG (e.g., *ǧamʿ* or *šaʿb*), then singular agreement—when it occurs instead of plural agreement—will be morphologically MSG; if the noun is FSG (e.g., *ǧamāʿah*) or broken plural (e.g., *ǧumūʿ* or *maḥāfil*), singular target agreement will be FSG:

(334) ثم التفت فقال للمحفل الذي كان يتبعه الحق أقول لكم اني لم اجد في ال اسرايل مثل هذا الايمان (82v)

> *ṯm ʾltft f-qʾl l-l-mḥfl ʾlḏy kʾn ytbʿ-h ʾl-ḥq ʾqwl l-km ʾn-y lm ʾǧd fy ʾl ʾsrʾyl mṯl hḏʾ ʾl-ʾymʾn*
>
> 'Then he turned and said to the crowd that (MSG) was following (MSG) him, "I tell you the truth that I have not found in all of the house of Israel such faith"'

but

(335) قال له ارباوه يا سيدنا {} المحافل تزحمك وتتضايق عليك وتضغطك من كل ناحيه (55v)

qʾl l-h ʾrbʾw-h yʾ syd-nʾ {} ʾl-mḥʾfl tzḥm-k w-tḍġṭ-k w-ttḍʾyq ʿly-k mn kl nʾḥyh

'His disciples said to him, "Master {} the crowds are closing in on you and pushing against you and crowding you from every side"'

The semantic and syntactic dynamics at play in MSG versus plural agreement with human plural and human collective controllers are the same as we saw in §1.2 above.

1.3. Feminine Plural Target Agreement

FPL target agreement is perhaps the most variable across corpora, from the ancient to modern periods. Bettega and D'Anna (2023, 166–71, §2.5) make the important point that the normative Classical (and Modern Standard) Arabic pattern in which FLP agreement occurs only when the controller is a human FPL is, in fact, the outlier rather than the norm. They show that in pre-Islamic poetry, the Quran, as well as those modern dialects that retain morphological distinction between MPL and FPL, FPL agreement is regular for non-human plural controllers, regardless of morphology. In Vat. Ar. 13, however, the vast majority of the 82 FPL targets modify human FPL controllers.

Table 60: Animacy of controllers with FPL target agreement

	Human	**Human COLL**	**Inanimate**
FPL Target Agreement	79/82 (96%)	1/82 (<2%)	2/82 (>2%)

Only two of the 82 FPL targets modify inanimate controllers, one of which modifies cities in Matt. 11.21, كورزين 'Chorazin' and بيت

صياذا ‘Bethsaida’, which in the context are symbolic of humans and are directly addressed in the speech of the narrative (the other, as we saw above, is an example of FPL verbal agreement with the noun *ʾamwāǧ*):

(336) فقال عند ذلك الويل لك يا كورزين والويل لك يا بيت صياذا... لو كانت القوى التى كانت فيكن فى صور وصيدان اذن لتاب اهلها (16v)
f-qʾl ʿnd ḏlk ʾl-wyl l-k yʾ kwrzyn w-ʾl-wyl l-k yʾ byt ṣyʾḏʾ…lw kʾnt ʾl-qwy ʾlty kʾnt fy-kn fy ṣwr w-ṣydʾn ʾḏn l-tāb ʾhl-hʾ
‘Then he said, “Woe to you, Chorazin, and woe to you, Bethsaida… if the wonders which occurred in you (FPL) had occurred in Tyre and Sidon, then their (FSG) people would have repented”’

The use of the FPL here is in fact a bit unusual, since we would expect either FDU for strict, syntactic agreement, or MPL for semantic agreement. Given the isolated nature of the example, however, it is difficult to say more. The point to be stressed here is the restriction of FPL to human female controllers, which is nearly total in the MS.

On the other hand, although FPL human controllers are essentially the only controllers that trigger FPL agreement in Vat. Ar. 13, FPL controllers are, in a minority of cases, attested triggering MPL target agreement. The breakdown of the agreement data with human FPL controllers is provided in Table 61 (overleaf).

Table 61: Plural human female nouns and agreement[1]

	FPL Target Agreement	MPL Target Agreement	Broken plural Target Agreement
Female Nouns (broken plural + FPL)	65/75 (87%)	7/75 (9%)	1/75 (<1%)

It is not always clear why the MPL is used when the FPL is clearly the default target agreement for female human nouns. A number of the instances of MPL agreement with FPL controllers occurs in direct speech, which might reflect an attempt to represent a vernacular pattern in order to lend authenticity to the text.

(337) فلما انتصف الليل فاذاهن بهاتف يقول هذا العروس قد اقبل احرجوا فتلقوه (43v)

f-lmʾ ʾntṣf ʾl-lyl f-ʾḏʾ-hn b-hʾtf yqwl hḏʾ ʾl-ʿrws qd ʾqbl ʾḫrǧwʾ f-tlqw-h

'Then in the middle of the night they (FPL) heard a shout, saying 'Here is the bridegroom; go out (MPL) and meet (MPL) him'

(338) فاحس العاقلات فقلن لعله لا يسعنا واياكم بل انطلقن الى الذين يبعون فاشعن لكن (44r)

f-ʾǧbn ʾl-ʿʾqlʾt f-qln lʿl-h lʾ ysʿ-nʾ w-ʾyʾ-km bl ʾnṭlqn ʾly ʾldyn ybtʿwn f-ʾbtʿn l-kn

'Then the wise [virgins] answered (FPL) and said (FPL), "It [the oil] might not suffice for us and you (MPL); go (FPL) to those who sell and buy (FPL) some for yourselves (FPL)"'

[1] The two remaining targets not represented in the table are MSG, both the adjective *kaṯīr*, which, as has already been noted above (§1.2) is frequently MSG regardless of the gender and number of the controller.

In both cases, the controllers are groups of human females, which mainly trigger FPL agreement, but occasionally MPL, as in the verbal imperatives in the first example or the pronoun suffix in the second. Bettega and D'Anna argue that innovations in the system of gender and number agreement—in this case, the innovation is the generalisation of MPL target agreement to FPL controllers—often begin in the pronominal system (2023, 272–73). It is thus possible that the use of the 2MPL pronominal suffix in the second example is intended to index that aspect of the vernacular. This is also attested, with greater frequency, in other early Gospel MSS (on which, see further below in §3.1).

Finally, a few instances of this phenomenon occur for reasons not recoverable, since, e.g., the MPL target is embedded in narrative, not direct speech, and FPL targets of the same target type are frequent in the same text:

(339) وكن واقفات من بعيد ينظرون نسوه منهم مريم المحدلانيه ومريم ام يعقوب الاصغر ويوسي وسالوم اللواتي اد كان في الجليل كن يصحبنه ويصعن له (74r/v)

w-kn wʾqfʾt mn bʿyd nswh ynẓrwn mn-ḥm mrym ʾl-mǧdlʾnyh w-mrym ʾm yʿqwb ʾl-ʾṣġr w-ywsy w-sʾlwm ʾllwʾty ʾd kʾn fy ʾl-ǧlyl kn yṣḥbn-h w-ytḍʿn l-h

'And there were (FPL) some women standing (FPL) far off watching (MPL), among them (MPL) were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of Jacob the younger and Joseph, and Salome, who (FPL), when he was in the Galilee, followed (FPL) and served (FPL)'

Whatever the reason behind the occasional occurrence of MPL target agreement with human FPL controllers, the fact remains that

FPL target agreement is by far the most common with human FPL controllers, but virtually never occurs with nouns lower on the animacy cline. Implications of this will be further discussed in §3.0 below.

1.4. Dual Target Agreement

Unlike the other kinds of target agreement studied so far, dual target agreement is largely a phenomenon of pre-modern corpora and Modern Standard Arabic; it is virtually absent in modern dialectal Arabic (with the exception of the so-called 'pseudo-dual', on which see Blanc's classic 1970 study).[2] Dual agreement is well attested in Vat. Ar. 13 across animacy and target type categories. When either a noun in the dual, or two singular nouns occur as the controller of a target, the vast majority (93 percent) trigger dual target agreement; the rest trigger either FSG or plural agreement. The data for the MS is presented in Table 62.

Table 62: Target agreement with dual controllers

	DU	**MPL**	**FSG**	**FPL**
DU Controllers	221/248 (89%)	17/248 (7%)	6/248 (>2%)	3/248 (<2%)

There is a single possible instance of MSG agreement with the target *laysa* and a preceding dual controller (*rağul wa-zawğah* 'a man and his wife'). The other targets in this portion of the text are

[2] Interestingly, these pseudo-duals trigger different agreement patterns across dialects, whether primarily FSG (as in, e.g., Bahraini Arabic, see Holes 2016, 349) or FPL (as in, e.g., Bedouin Tunisian dialects, on which see Ritt-Benmimoun 2017, 267, *apud* Bettega and D'Anna 2023, 99, n. 75).

dual, so this likely reflects a more general trend for *laysa*, along with *kāna*, to attest MSG agreement in certain contexts.

Instances of MPL target agreement with dual controllers often correlate with increased distance from the controller. Note the following example, in which two disciples are sent ahead to inquire about the place where Jesus was to eat the Passover meal. The initial verb and pronoun attest dual agreement, whereas subsequent verbs attest MPL agreement:

(340) فارسل رداين من ارداية وقال لهما انطلقا الي المدينه فسيلقاكما رجل معه انافيه ما اتبعوه وادحلوا الموصع الذي يدحل فقولو لرب البيت (71r)

f-ʾrsl rdʾyn mn ʾrdʾy-h w-qʾl l-hmʾ ʾnṭlqʾ ʾly ʾl-mdynh f-s-ylqʾ kmʾ rğl mʿ-h ʾnʾfyh mʾ ʾtbʿw-h w-ʾdḫlwʾ ʾl-mwḍʿ ʾlḏy ydḫl f-qwlw l-rb ʾl-byt

'And he sent two disciples from among his disciples and he said to them (DU), "Go (DU) into the city and a man with a water jug will meet you (DU). Follow (PL) him and enter (DU) the place he enters, and say (PL) to the owner of the house..."'

This is in line with the trend seen with the shift from singular > plural agreement (and indeed elsewhere, as seen in Ch. 6, §3.0, affects verbal mood as well), wherein distance from the controller strongly correlates with various kinds of syntactic and inflectional shifts.

Elsewhere, the use of dual/plural appears to be associated with a heightened saliency or agency, whereas singular agreement occurs in contexts where the opposite is the case:

(341) وكان واقف على ساحل البحيره حياسار فراي سفينين واقفتين على ساحل البحيره ونظر الى قناص قد خرجوا منها يغسلون مصايدهم (77r)

w-kʾn wʾqf ʿly sʾḥl ʾl-bḥyrh ḥynʾsʾr [gynʾsʾr] f-rʾy sfyntyn wʾqftyn ʿl sʾḥl ʾl-bḥyrh w-nẓr ʾly qnʾṣ qd ḫrǧwʾ mn-hʾ yġslwn mṣʾyd-hm

'And he [Jesus] was standing on the shore of the Lake of Ginosaur and he saw two boats sitting (FDU) on the short of the lake, and he saw fishermen who had come from them (FSG) and were cleaning their nets'

In this example, the same dual controller—*safīnatayn* 'two boats'—triggers dual verbal adjective agreement when their position is the focus, but when the focus shifts to the fishermen who were cleaning nets, agreement shifts from FDU to FSG.

It is worth explicitly noting that while plural animal and inanimate controllers almost always trigger FPL (or broken plural) target agreement, dual animal and inanimate controllers regularly trigger dual target agreement

(342) اتيانى بهما فان قال لكما قايل فيهما شيا قولا له ان سدنا يحتاج اليهما (34r)

ʾtyʾ-ny b-hmʾ f-ʾn qʾl l-kmʾ qʾyl fy-hmʾ šyʾ qwlʾ l-h ʾn syd-nʾ yḥtʾǧ ʾly-hmʾ

'Bring them ['ayr wa-ǧaḥš] (DU) to me, and if anyone says anything about them (DU), tell him that our master has need of them (DU)'

(343) وكذلك ايضا صاحب القطارين ربح عليهما قنطارين اخرين (44v)

w-kḏlk ʾyḍʾ ṣʾḥb ʾl-qnṭʾryn rbḥ ʿly-hmʾ qnṭʾryn ʾḫryn

'Likewise, the one with two silver talents made another (DU) two silver talents' profit off of them (DU)'

While animacy can and does interact with agreement even in the dual, leading to (F)SG agreement with controllers low on the animacy hierarchy, it is rare and much less common than FSG agreement with plural controllers low on the hierarchy. This, and the above example, supports the notion that the dual, by virtue of its rather marked implications, by default heightens the individuation/saliency of the controller relative to the singular or plural.

Another dimension to the data emerges when we break it down further. When we look at both dual and non-dual agreement by hand, as we see in Table 63, we find that when dual agreement is not selected, the choice is typically MPL. Hands A and D, however, both alternate with FSG; this is regular for Hand A, but occurs only once with Hand D.

Table 63: Agreement with DU controllers across scribal hands

Hand	DU	MSG	FSG	MPL	FPL
A	91	1	5	7	—
B	49	—	—	5	—
C	19	—	—	2	—
D	58	—	1	3	1

One interpretation of this data is straightforward: this distribution reflects a historically middle distribution, in which the dual target agreement is still mostly living, but is beginning to give way to the plural. This is reflected in modern dialects, which have lost the dual as a target agreement pattern. Alternatively, we might imagine that the dual was by the 9th or 10th centuries CE already more or less moribund in contemporary spoken varieties. In that case, this distribution could reflect a compromise of sorts, between living grammars and the target register of the scribes, in

which the dual was still common, if not obligatory.[3] This sort of compromise—wherein a feature is used to some degree according to two different registers, with two different patterns—is similar to what Bellem and Smith (2012) argue for in order to understand the distribution of certain features in a 13th-century CE Yemeni text produced by Ibn Muǧāwir. Evidence for this among other Christian MSS will be discussed in §3.1 below. Whichever interpretation we opt for, one aspect of the grammars of the dual that clearly differs by scribal hand is the likelihood of dual agreement based on target type, as can be seen in Table 64.

Table 64: Target agreement with dual controllers

Hand	ADJ	PN	Verb	RELPN	DEM
A	9/10 (90%)	42/52 (81%)	39/40 (98%)	1/1 (100%)	1/1 (100%)
B	2/2 (100%)	17/17 (100%)	31/37 (84%)	—	—
C	2/2 (100%)	10/10 (100%)	7/9 (78%)	—	—
D	9/10 (90%)	26/27 (96%)	24/28 (86%)	1/1 (100%)	—

[3] In, e.g., the Quran, dual agreement is typical, but not ubiquitous. The most convincing example of plural agreement with a dual controller not involving semantic agreement (*ad sensu*) occurs in two separate verses of Sūrah Raḥmān, namely Q55.46, 56.

وَلِمَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ جَنَّتَانِ... فِيهِنَّ قاصِرَاتُ الطَّرْفِ لَمْ يَطْمِثْهُنَّ إِنْسٌ قَبْلَهُم وَلَا جَانٌّ

'[46] But such as fears the station of his Lord, for them shall be two gardens (DU)... [56] in which (FPL) are maidens restraining their glances, untouched before them by any man or *ǧinn*.'

The difference is that in the Quran, plural agreement with inanimate FDU nouns is FPL, not MPL as (mostly) in Vat. Ar. 13. I thank Melanie Hanitsch for this reference and very stimulating discussions of the diachronic development of the dual based on the Quran and other corpora. She is currently working on a paper on the dual as a historical category, which no doubt will add much to nuance the present discussion.

In Hands B and C, and to a lesser extent in Hand D, verbs less commonly exhibit dual agreement with dual controllers than adjectives and pronouns. In Hand A, however, verbs (along with relative and demonstrative pronouns) are most likely to exhibit it, followed by adjectives, and pronouns least likely.

1.5. Masculine Plural Agreement with Non-Human Animate and Inanimate Plural Controllers

Whereas human plural and human collective controllers, as expected, frequently trigger MPL post-controller target agreement, such MPL agreement with non-human animate and inanimate plural controllers occurs as well. The main category of nominal controllers that trigger MPL agreement in Vat. Ar. 13 is divine beings, specifically angels and demons.

(344) اذا ما اتا في مجد ابيه مع ملايكته المقدسين (60v)
ʾḏʾ mʾ ʾtʾ fy mǧd ʾby-h mʿ mlʾykt-h ʾl-mqdsyn
'When he comes in the glory of his father with his holy (MPL) angels'

(345) وكان يزجرهم ويمنعهم ان يخبروا بانهم يعرفونه بانه المسيح (77r)
w-kʾn yzǧr-hm w-ymnʿ-hm ʾn yḫbrwʾ b-ʾn-hm yʿrfwn-h b-ʾn-h ʾl-msyḥ
'And he was rebuking them (MPL) and preventing them (MPL) from telling (MPL) that they (MPL) know that he is the messiah'

The use of MPL with divine beings likely stems from their similarity to humans (cf. Hanitsch 2024, 45).

2.0. Pre-Controller Agreement

As one would expect, the majority of pre-controller targets consist of demonstrative pronouns and verbal predicates; I counted only three adjectives in pre-controller contexts, two of which involve so-called 'improper annexation' (Arabic *ʾiḍāfah ġayr al-ḥaqīqiyyah*), in which an adjective occurs as the first term of a construct phrase with the head that it modifies. Note that, as is typical in this construction, though synchronically analysed as a construct, the adjective still agrees with the head noun like other attributive adjectives in Arabic (on the diachrony of this construction, see Pat-El 2012). The two examples attested in the MS involve controllers that are inanimate, and both of which trigger FSG agreement in the target.

(346) قال لهم ليس يحتاج الاصحّا الي طبيْب بل المرضى الشديده امراضهم (12r/v)
qʾl l-hm lys yḥtʾǧ ʾl-ʾṣḥḥʾ ʾly ṭbyb bl ʾl-mrḍy ʾl-šdydh ʾmrʾḍ-hm
'He said to them, "The well do not need a doctor, but rather those sick with bad maladies do"'

(347) وارسلني لاشفى الضعيفه قلوبهم (75v)
w-ʾrsl-ny l-ʾšfy ʾl-ḍʿyfh qlwb-hm
'And he sent me to heal the brokenhearted'

There is a sharp distinction in pre-controller agreement in the category of demonstratives—wherein individuated human nouns almost always trigger plural agreement, but human collectives and inanimates virtually always trigger singular agreement—and verbs, the vast majority of which exhibit singular agreement, regardless of animacy. This is not a ubiquitous trend, however, and both human plural and human collective nouns

trigger plural verbal agreement in a minority of cases (no other animacy type does, though). The data is presented in Table 65.

Table 65: Pre-controller singular agreement with plural controller by target type and controller animacy

Controller	DEMs	Verbal Predicates
Human PL	1/5 (20%)	158/172 (92%)
Human COLL	7/8 (88%)	94/99 (95%)
Divine PL	—	4/4 (100%)
Animal PL	—	6/6 (100%)
Inanimate PL	44/49 (90%)	52/52 (100%)

With demonstrative targets, human plural nouns rarely trigger singular agreement, whereas for both human collectives and inanimate plural nouns, singular agreement is the norm. The sole example of singular demonstrative agreement with plural human nouns occurs in a verse where there are technically two controllers, the first a FSG noun and the second a broken plural one. We may assume that the FSG demonstrative is due to the fact that it precedes the FSG noun

(348) فقال له رجل من الجماعه هذه امك واخوتك وقوف برا وهم يريدون كلامك (19v)

f-qʾl l-h rǧl mn ʾl-ǧmʿh hḏh ʾm-k w-ʾḫwt-k wqwf brʾ w-hm yrydwn klʾm-k

'And a man from the crowd said to him [Jesus], "Here (FSG) are your mother and your brothers standing (BPL) outside and they (MPL) want to talk to you"'

Regarding plural inanimate controllers, they almost always trigger FSG agreement. The five examples of non-FSG demonstrative target agreement with plural inanimate controllers are all dual,

highlighting the saliency of the dual category for individuation, even for controllers at the low end of the animacy hierarchy.

One of the primary differences between pre- and post-controller target agreement is the phenomenon whereby pre-controller verbal targets tend to lack number agreement. In normative Classical Arabic, lack of number agreement becomes obligatory, regardless of the animacy of the controller. In the *ʿArabiyyah*, some corpora attest this lack of number concord, while others attested regular plural agreement, a phenomenon the grammarians called *ʾakalūnī al-barāġīṯ* 'the fleas ate [i.e., bit] me' (on which, see Guillaume 2011). In Vat. Ar. 13, the vast majority of pre-controller verbal targets attest a lack of number agreement, with only 19/339 (5 percent) of verbal targets attesting plural agreement. All examples with plural pre-controller verbal agreement are with either human plural or human collective nouns; no verbal target of an animal or inanimate controller occurs.

When broken down by scribal hand, however, it is clear that one hand, namely Hand C, diverges from the patterns attested in the other three.

Table 66: Singular versus plural pre-controller verbal agreement, by scribal hand

Hand	PL	SG	Totals
A	12 (6%)	190 (94%)	202
B	2 (4%)	52 (96%)	54
C	3 (23%)	10 (77%)	13
D	2 (3%)	68 (97%)	70
Totals	19 (6%)	320 (94%)	339
Significance (X^2) p = .0304			

Hands A and B, and the latest Hand D, each attest plural agreement at around the same rate, between 3–6 percent. Hand C attests a rate of about 23 percent, almost five times more frequent than the other hands. Indeed, this difference reaches the level of statistical significance. Here again, Hand C patterns with trends attested in other early Gospel MSS more frequently than the other scribal hands do (see further in §3.0). Once again, we can say that Hands A and B pattern together, Hand C patterns more with the other early Christian MSS, and Hand D moves closest to what becomes the normative Classical pattern.

Whereas post-controller singular agreement with plural controllers is typically FSG, pre-controller verbal targets often manifest MSG and FSG, even with the same controller. When the controller is human, it seems that MSG and FSG might occupy different slots on the cline of individuation, with MSG at the very bottom, lower even than FSG. See the following pairs of examples.

2.1. Human

2.1.1. *ʾābāʾ* ‘forefathers, ancestors’

(349) واسم ايضا فاكملوا ما عمل اباوكم فاتموا على ما فعل اباوكم (40v)
w-ʾntm ʾyḍʾ f-ʾkmlwʾ mʾ ʿml ʾbʾw-km f-ʾtmwʾ ʿly mʾ fʿl ʾbʾw-km
‘But you likewise complete the work that your forefathers did (MSG), and you bring about what they did (MSG)’

(350) هاكذا فعلت اباوهم بالانبيا الماضيه قبلكم (80v)
hʾkḏʾ fʿlt ʾbʾw-hm b-ʾl-ʾnbyʾ ʾl-mʾḍyh qbl-km
‘Your forefathers did (FSG) the same thing to the prophets of the past who were before you’

2.1.2. *ʾaḥbār* ‘religious leaders; Pharisees’

(351) فلما راي الاحبار انه قد قمع الزنادقه واسكتهم اجتمعوا باسرهم معا (38r)
f-lmʾ rʾy ʾl-ʾḥbʾr ʾn-h qd qmʿ ʾl-znʾdqh w-ʾskt-hm ʾğtmʿwʾ b-ʾsr-hm mʿʾ
‘But when the Pharisees saw (MSG) that he had defeated the Sadducees and silenced them, they gathered altogether’

(352) فحرجت الاحبار فتشاوروا في امره ليهلكوه (18r)
f-ḫrğt ʾl-ʾḥbʾr f-tšʾwrwʾ fy ʾmr-h l-yhlkw-h
‘Then the Pharisees left (FSG) and discussed the matter of him [Jesus] together, in order to destroy him’

2.2. Human Collective

2.2.1. *ğumūʿ* ‘crowds’

(353) فلما سمع الجموع ذلك اتبعوه فى السس من جميع المدن (23r)
f-lmʾ smʿ ʾl-ğmwʿ ḏlk ʾtbʿw-h fy ʾl-ybs mn ğmyʿ ʾl-mdn
‘But when the crowds heard (MSG) that, they followed him into the wilderness from all the surrounding cities’

(354) فتعجبت الجمُوع وقالت ما راي قط احد مثل هذه الجريحه في بنى اسرايل (13v)
f-tʿğbt ʾl-ğmuwʿ w-qʾlt mʾ rʾy qṭ ʾḥd mṯl hḏh ʾl-ğryḥh fy bny ʾsrʾyl
‘And the crowds were amazed (FSG) and said, “No one has seen a miracle like this among the Israelites”’

2.2.2. *maḥāfil* ‘crowds, masses’

(355) فلما سمع ذلك المحافل جعلوا يتعجبون من تعليمه (38r)
f-lmʾ smʿ ḏlk ʾl-mḥʾfl ğʿlwʾ ytʿğbwn mn tʿlym-h

'And when the crowds heard (MSG) that, they began to be amazed by his teaching'

(356) فجعلت المحافل تنتهرهما ليسكتا وحعلاهما يزدادان رفعا لاصواتهما وبقولان يا سيدنا ارحمنا (34r)

f-ǧʿlt ʾl-mḥʾfl tnthr-hmʾ l-ysktʾ w-ǧʿlʾ-hmʾ yzdʾdʾn rfʿʾ l-ʾṣwʾt-hmʾ w-yqwlʾn yʾ syd-nʾ ʾrḥm-nʾ

'The crowds began (FSG) to chide them so that they would be silent, but they began raising their voices even more, saying "Oh Lord, have mercy on us!"'

In each set, the context of the verses with MSG verbal agreement appears focused on the groups as faceless units, as homogeneous wholes acting in unison. In three of four (75 percent) of the examples with FSG agreement, the groups still act in unison, but there is reported speech, adding saliency and agency to the action not present in the other examples.

Nevertheless, the trend is for nouns higher on the animacy hierarchy to trigger MSG more commonly than controllers with low animacy.

Table 67: MSG versus FSG on singular pre-controller verbal targets by controller animacy

Controller	**MSG**	**FSG**
Human PL	145/160 (91%)	15/160 (9%)
Human COLL	79/94 (84%)	15/94 (16%)
Divine	2/4 (50%)	2/4 (50%)
Animal	3/6 (50%)	3/6 (50%)
Inanimate	11/53 (21%)	42/53 (79%)

Based on the data in Table 67, it appears that the main divide is between human and non-human controllers. Non-human animate controllers equally attest MSG and FSG agreement. Inanimates typically trigger FSG agreement; however, a sizable minority of cases

involve MSG verbal agreement. Seven of these 11 (64 percent) examples of MSG agreement with inanimate plural controllers are from Hand B sections, with the other four from Hand A. The distribution of these MSG targets differs between the two hands in an interesting way. All four of Hand A's examples of MSG agreement occur with the verb *kān*, and in each case it serves to mark existential or possessive predication, contexts in which grammaticalisation of the 3MSG is quite common, as in the following examples.

(357) لو كان بصور وصيدان العجايب والايات التي كانت فيكما (16v)
lw kʾn b-ṣwr w-ṣydʾn ʾl-ʿǧʾyb w-ʾl-ʾyʾt ʾlty kʾnt fy-kmʾ
'If the signs and wonders which took place in you [cities] had occurred (MSG) in Tyre and Sidon...'

(358) فانطلق فبع مالك واعطه المساكين ويكون لك خزانه في السما (31v)
f-ʾnṭlq f-bʿ mʾl-k w-ʾʿṭ-h ʾl-msʾkyn w-ykwn l-k ḫzʾnh fy ʾl-smʾ
'So go and sell your wealth and give it to the poor, and you will have (MSG) a treasure in heaven'

Hand B, however, uses pre-controller 3MSG verbs in a broader array of contexts, which is illustrated nicely in an example from the Gospel of Mark (15.25–26):

(359) وكان قد مصا من النهار حين صلبوه ثلث ساعات وكان قد كتب قصه موته فى كتاب (74r)
w-kʾn qd mḍʾ mn ʾl-nhʾr ḥyn ṣlbw-h ṯlṯ sʾʿʾt w-kʾn qd ktb qṣh mwt-h fy ktʾb
'And it was (MSG) about nine in the morning when they crucified him, and the story of his death had been recorded (MSG) in a book'

Both of these categories are well documented from other Arabic corpora, pre-modern and modern (§3.2), and especially clauses with *kāna*, *laysa*, and *ṣār*, which are often used for existential predications, including possessive constructions, and typically result in greater distance between the verbal target and its controller. Another factor that is apparently significant in determining whether gender agreement occurs (i.e., FSG), or is neutralised (resulting in MSG), is the type of plural. We have already seen that FSG post-controller targets occur overwhelmingly with animate controllers that are broken plural rather than sound plural. This is once again the case here, with FSG occurring much more frequently with broken plural than with sound plural (see data in Table 68). And while few in number, paucal plural (e.g., *ʾafʿul*) morphology tends to elicit FSG agreement.

Table 68: MSG versus FSG pre-controller verbal agreement based on plural form of controller

	BPL/Paucal PL	**Sound FPL**
FSG Agreement	41	2
MSG Agreement	3	6
Significance (Fisher's exact test) p = .0001		

The difference turns out to be statistically significant. In fact, the distinction is even starker when we consider the fact that, of the two examples of FSG agreement with FPL controllers, both are in a series of controllers with either a broken plural or following FSG. Although the tendency for sound FPL inanimates to trigger MSG pre-controller verbal agreement, rather than FSG, might at first appear to be the opposite of expectations, the phenomenon is also attested in the Quran (see further §3.2).

3.0. Comparison with Other Early Corpora

3.1. Post-Controller Data

Numerous studies provide both quantitative data and close analysis of gender and number agreement in the pre-Islamic *qaṣīdah* poetic corpus, the Quran, as well as several early Christian Arabic MSS. Comparing the data from Vat. Ar. 13 with these corpora reveals significant points of continuity, but with some notable differences. First and foremost, we saw that FSG agreement in Vat. Ar. 13 is inversely related to the position of the controller on the animacy hierarchy, with FSG agreement increasing the lower the controller sits in terms of animacy. This trend is ubiquitous in the early corpora.

Table 69: Post-controller FSG agreement along animacy cline, pre- and early Islamic corpora[4]

MS	Human	Human COLL	Divine	Animal	Inanimate
Qaṣāʾid	4/78 (5%)	—	—	18/45 (40%)	59/96 (62%)
Quran	15/59 (25%)	—	—	11/26 (42%)	339/454 (75%)
SAr. 154	2/44 (5%)	8/107 (8%)	1/6 (17%)	2/2 (100%)	50/68 (74%)
BL 4950	12/57 (21%)	12/54 (22%)	13/25 (52%)	—	103/130 (79%)
SAr. 74	4/237 (2%)	29/126 (23%)	17/32 (53%)	14/40 (35%)	69/91 (76%)
SAr. 72	1/195 (<1%)	19/116 (16%)	3/12 (25%)	6/18 (33%)	64/98 (65%)
SAr. 75	1/277 (<1%)	9/130 (7%)	0/15	9/22 (41%)	54/87 (62%)
SAr. 70	25/296 (9%)	21/97 (22%)	7/17 (41%)	16/19 (84%)	53/90 (59%)
Vat. Ar. 13	5/510 (1%)	28/364 (8%)	23/44 (52%)	35/41 (85%)	223/263 (85%)

[4] Data for the *qaṣāʾid* poetic corpus and the Quran taken from Bettega and D'Anna (2023, 207). Data for SAr. 74, 72, 75, 70, and BL 4950 taken from Stokes (2024c, 149). Finally, the data for SAr. 154 is based on my own tallies for the purposes of this study.

However, whereas the Classical and Modern Standard Arabic pattern of obligatory FSG agreement with inanimate plural controllers is not attested in any of the MSS, Vat. Ar. 13 seems to be much closer to such an agreement system than these other MSS and corpora. As we saw above, plural agreement is extremely rare with inanimate plural controllers. The primary counterexamples to FSG agreement are either MSG with the relative pronoun, or dual controllers, which even in Classical Arabic would likely likewise trigger dual agreement. Only one example of FPL with inanimate plural controllers was recorded. Thus, while the other early Christian MSS—including four translations of the Gospels—attest a system that reflects most of the dynamics of the pre-Islamic one, Vat. Ar. 13 witnesses significant movement toward the one that becomes ubiquitous in Classical Arabic.

Target type also correlates with the likelihood of FSG versus plural agreement in Vat. Ar. 13, and this is another place where the same trends are observable in other early corpora. In the pre-Islamic poetic and Quranic corpora, Bettega and D'Anna (2023, 263) show that personal pronouns are most likely to attest FSG agreement, followed by verbs, with adjectives least likely: pronoun > verb > adjective. Vat. Ar. 13, on the other hand, patterns with the early Christian Arabic corpora and modern gender-distinguishing dialects in attesting the opposite order, with adjectives most likely and pronouns least likely to attest FSG agreement when plural controllers are considered together regardless of animacy: adjective > verb > pronoun (for the other early Christian Arabic MSS, see Stokes 2024c, 120–21). However, in the Christian corpus, including now Vat. Ar. 13, target type and

animacy interact in this regard. Specifically, while adjectives are overwhelmingly more likely to attest FSG agreement than either verbs or pronouns when modifying human PL and human collective controllers, with inanimate plural controllers the Christian corpus is much closer to the *qaṣīdah* and Quranic corpora. This shows up across the early Arabic corpora (Table 70).

Table 70: FSG agreement for human plural, human collectives, and inanimate plural controllers by target type, early Christian MSS

	Human Plural			Human Collective			Inanimate		
MS	**ADJ**	**VERB**	**PN**	**ADJ**	**VERB**	**PN**	**ADJ**	**VERB**	**PN**
SAr. 154	0/2	0/28	0/12	0/2	0/34	6/68 (9%)	18/19 (95%)	8/12 (67%)	19/33 (58%)
BL 4950	1/5 (20%)	6/16 (38%)	3/30 (10%)	3/4 (75%)	1/20 (5%)	5/27 (19%)	21/29 (72%)	12/18 (67%)	52/68 (77%)
SAr. 74	1/39 (3%)	1/121 (<1%)	1/71 (1%)	18/25 (72%)	7/62 (11%)	4/37 (11%)	32/43 (74%)	21/27 (78%)	13/14 (93%)
SAr. 72	0/29	1/101 (1%)	0/57	14/23 (61%)	3/63 (5%)	1/28 (4%)	18/30 (60%)	23/34 (68%)	15/24 (63%)
SAr. 75	1/32 (3%)	0/172	0/68	4/16 (25%)	3/75 (4%)	2/35 (6%)	12/24 (50%)	16/28 (57%)	13/22 (59%)
SAr. 70	3/28 (11%)	17/181 (9%)	3/79 (4%)	10/17 (59%)	8/49 (16%)	3/28 (11%)	16/24 (67%)	18/34 (53%)	6/16 (38%)
Vat. Ar. 13	2/46 (4%)	3/313 (1%)	0/128	12/25 (48%)	13/213 (6%)	2/109 (2%)	75/89 (84%)	44/51 (86%)	78/94 (83%)

As we see here, the only exception is BL 4950, which attests the order verb > adjective > pronoun with plural human controllers. Otherwise, human plural and human collective controllers ubiquitously trigger FSG on adjectives more frequently than verbs or pronouns. With inanimate plural controllers, the tendency is much higher among verbs and pronouns. Only two MSS (SAr. 154 and SAr. 70) attest the adjective > verb > pronoun order, and

the only examples of pronoun > verb > adjective are with inanimate plural controllers. Indeed, the pronoun is likeliest to attest FSG agreement almost exclusively when the controllers are inanimate.

Table 71: Order of frequency for post-controller FSG agreement by target type and animacy

Order	**Human PL**	**Human COLL**	**Inanimate PL**	**Totals**
ADJ > verb > PN*	70, 13	72, 70, 13	154, 70	7
ADJ > PN > verb	74	4950, 75	—	3
ADJ > verb = PN	75	74	—	2
verb > ADJ > PN	4950	—	13	2
verb > PN > ADJ	—	—	72	1
verb > PN = ADJ	72	—	—	1
PN > verb > ADJ**	—	—	74, 75	2
PN > ADJ > verb	—	—	4950	1
PN > verb = ADJ	—	154	—	1

*Modern Dialectal System

**Old System

FSG was seen to carry the same semantics of [−individuation]/[−saliency] that scholars have reported in the pre-Islamic *qaṣīdah* and Quranic corpora (Belnap 1999; Bettega and D'Anna 2023; Hanitsch 2023). The following examples, each adduced by Bettega and D'Anna, attest human plural controllers triggering FSG agreement which, for semantic and pragmatic reasons, indicate [−individuation].

(360) غُلْبٌ تَشَذَّرُ بِالدُّخُولِ كَأَنَّهَا جِنُّ البَدِيِّ رَوَاسِيًا أَقْدَامُهَا
ġulbun tašaḏḏaru bi-d-duḫūli ka-ʾanna-hā ǧinnu l-Badiyyi rawāsiyan ʾaqdāmu-hā
'Bold men threatening (FSG) each other with blood revenge, as if they (FSG) were the jinn of al-Badiyy, whose feet are firm' (Labīd, 71, apud Bettega and D'Anna 2023, 161)

(361) يُدَهْدُونَ الرُّؤُوسَ كَمَا تُدَهْدِي حَزَاوِرَةٌ بِأَبْطَاحِهَا الكُرِينَ
yudahdūna r-ruʾūsa ka-mā tudahdī ḥazawiratun bi-ʾabṭāḥi-hā l-kurīna
'They cause the heads to roll on the ground, as strong boys roll (FSG) balls in their (FSG) playgrounds' ('Amr, 97, apud Bettega and D'Anna 2023, 161)

(362) وَمَا أَمْوَالُكُم وَلَا أَوْلَادُكُم بِالَّتِي تُقَرِّبُكُم عِنْدَنَا زُلْفَى
wa-mā ʾamwālu-kum wa-lā ʾawlādu-kum bi-llatī tuqarribu-kum ʿinda-nā zulfā...
'It is not your wealth nor your children that (FSG) shall bring (FSG) you nigh in nearness to Us...' (Q34.37, apud Bettega and D'Anna 2023, 210)

This is attested in the other Gospel MSS from monastic milieux dating to the 9th and 10th centuries CE (Stokes 2024c, 113–19. §3.1.1).

(363) احتفظوا من الانبيا الكذابه التي تاتيكم بلباس الخرفان (SAr. 70, 9v)
ʾḥtfẓwʾ mn ʾl-ʾnbyʾ ʾl-kḏʾbh ʾlty tʾty-km b-lbʾs ʾl-ḫrfʾn
'Beware the false prophets who (FSG) will come (FSG) to you dressed as sheep'

However, in the other early Arabic Gospel MSS this FSG versus dual/plural distinction is mainly attested with non-human plural controllers. Note the following pairs and the contrast.

3.1.1. Animal Controllers

(364) تجدان اتان مربوط وعفوا معها حلوهما وقربوهما (SAr. 74, 45r)
tǧdʾn ʾtʾn mrbwṭ w-ʿfwʾ mʿ-hʾ ḥlw-hmʾ w-qrbw-hmʾ
'You (DU) will find a colt tied up and a foal with it, so untie (PL) them (DU) and bring them (DU) both'

(365) وقربوا الاتان والعفوا فوضعوا ثيابهم عليها وجلسوا عليها (SAr. 74, 45r)
w-qrbwʾ ʾl-ʾtʾn w-ʾl-ʿfwʾ f-wḍʿwʾ ṯyʾb-hm ʿly-hʾ w-ǧlswʾ ʿly-hʾ
'Then they brought the colt and foal and they put their garments on them (FSG) and sat on them (FSG)'

3.1.2. Inanimate Controllers

(366) قوات السما تتزلزل (SAr. 72, 30r)
qwʾt ʾl-smʾ ttzlzl
'The powers of the heavens will shake (FSG)'

(367) من هو هذا الذي ان الريح والبحر يطيعاه (SAr. 72, 10v)
mn hw hḏʾ ʾlḏy ʾn ʾl-ryḥ w-ʾl-bḥr yṭyʿʾ-h
'Who is this man whom the wind and the sea obey (DU)?'

In the first set of examples, the animals—a coat and foal—are both involved, but whereas in the first they are the focus, in the second the focus is more on the activities and agency of the crowds. In the second set of examples, the 'powers of the heavens' are treated as an indistinct whole, whereas in the second example, the objects have agency and act, obeying Jesus and thereby serving as examples to those who witness Jesus's miracles. It was in a similar context—the wind tossing the ships on the Sea of Galilee—that the single example of FPL verbal agreement with an inanimate plural controller occurred (§1.1). The usage of FSG with inanimate plural controllers in Vat. Ar. 13 is, compared with the robustness of this trend in the *qaṣīdah* poetic corpus, the

Quran, and even the other early Gospel translations, as well as the modern dialects, rather limited. Indeed, of these MSS and corpora, Vat. Ar. 13 is the most Classical-like (for a nice visual summary of typical Classical and Modern Standard Arabic agreement patterns, see Bettega and D'Anna 2023, 167, Table 2.30).

Finally, FSG agreement with plural controllers was seen to be much likelier in Vat. Ar. 13 when the controller was broken plural instead of sound plural, such that the difference was both impressionistically stark (FSG agreement with 46 percent of broken plural controllers but only 5 percent of sound dual or plural ones) and statistically significant. The same trend is consistently attested in the *qaṣīdah* and Quranic corpora, the modern dialects, and the other early Christian Gospel MSS (Bettega and D'Anna 2023, 161, 209–10; Stokes 2024c, 119). In the early Christian corpus, for example, three out of four (75 percent) of the Gospel MSS attest FSG with human plural controllers only when the controllers are broken plural, and in the fourth (SAr. 70), there are only two counterexamples.

The phenomenon of MSG agreement in Vat. Ar. 13 is primarily associated with human controllers, mainly human collectives, as well as adjectives of the pattern *faʿīl*. In Vat. Ar. 13, the singular agreement option is syntactic (i.e., morphologically MSG human controllers trigger MSG agreement, but morphologically FSG or broken plural nouns trigger FSG agreement), but the semantics seem mostly to align with what we saw for FSG, since both singular and plural agreement options are available for most human collectives. The only collective that attests MSG, FSG, and

plural agreement is *šaʿb* ‘people’, but even there, MSG and plural are by far the most common agreement; FSG is only attested once.

(368) الشعب الجالس فى الظلمه راي نورا عظيما (3v)
ʾl-šʿb ʾl-ǧʾls fy ʾl-ẓlmh rʾy nwrʾ ʿẓymʾ
‘The people sitting (MSG) in darkness has seen (MSG) a great light’

(369) ستنتزع منكم ملكوت الله وتصير الى شعب تثمر ثمارا صالحه (36v)
s-tntzʿ mn-km mlkwt ʾllh w-tṣyr ʾly šʿb tṯmr ṯmʾrʾ ṣʾlḥh
‘The kingdom of God will be taken from you and go to a people that produces (FSG) righteous fruit’

(370) هذا السعب ولم يسمعوا بادانهم الا سمعا ثقيلا (20r)
hḏʾ ʾl-šʿb w-lm ysmʿwʾ b-ʾḏʾn-hm ʾlʾ smʿʾ ṯqylʾ
‘This people has barely heard (MPL) with their (MPL) ears’

Such examples are likewise rare in the other early Christian MSS for which we have data. The examples of MSG agreement with plural nouns from the first 25 percent of each of the Gospels studied in Stokes (2024c) are all collectives, though animal collectives rather than human ones.

(371) فجا طير السما فاكله (16r)
f-ǧʾ ṭyr ʾl-smʾ f-ʾkl-h
‘Then the birds of the sky came (MSG) and ate (MSG) it’

(372) انظروا الي طير السما انها لا تزرع ولا تحصد ولا تجمع في الخزاين وابوكم السماوي يعولهن افليس انتم افضل منهم (8v)
ʾnẓrwʾ ʾly ṭyr ʾl-smʾ ʾn-hʾ lʾ tzrʿ w-lʾ tḥṣd w-lʾ tǧmʿ fy ʾl-ḫzʾyn w-ʾbw-km ʾl-smʾwy yʿwl-hn ʾ-f-lys ʾntm ʾfḍl mn-hm
‘Look at the birds of the sky, how they do not sew (FSG) nor reap (FSG) nor gather (FSG) in storehouses, but your heavenly father provides for them (FPL). Are you not more valuable than them (MPL)?’

This contrasts with human collectives in other corpora, including the Quran as well as modern dialects, in which three possibilities exist: (1) syntactic (wherein agreement simply matches the gender/number of the controller), (2) semantic agreement via FSG with [−individuated] nouns, and (3) semantic agreement with [+individuated] nouns (Bettega and D'Anna 2023, 88, 217–22, §3.4.1). Note the following examples from the Quran (taken from Bettega and D'Anna 2023, 217).

(373) تَنْزِعُ النَّاسَ كَأَنَّهُمْ أَعْجَازُ نَخْلٍ مُنْقَعِرٍ (Q54.20)
tanziʿu n-nāsa ka-ʾanna-hum ʾaʿǧāzu naḫlin munqaʿirin
'Plucking up men as if they were stumps of uprooted (MSG) palm-trees'

(374) وَزُرُوعٍ وَنَخْلٍ طَلْعُهَا هَضِيمٌ (Q26.148)
wa-zurūʿin wa-naḫlin ṭalʿu-hā haḍīmun
'Sown fields, and palms with slender (FSG) spathes'

(375) وَالنَّخْلَ بَاسِقَاتٍ لَهَا طَلْعٌ نَدِيدٌ (Q50.10)
wa-n-naḫla bāsiqātin la-hā ṭalʿun nadīd
'And tall (FPL) palm-trees with spathes compact'

Thus, while both singular and plural agreement with plural controllers are options in the early Christian corpus, the alternation between MSG and FSG appears to be largely syntactic, except in cases with an adjective target of the *faʿīl* pattern.

The choice of singular versus plural agreement with plural controllers is, finally, affected by two further factors, namely the distance from the controller and the presence/absence of certain quantifiers. Regarding the first, in Vat. Ar. 13 increased distance from the controller tends to increase the likelihood of plural agreement, even if earlier targets are SG. This is, again, a feature

attested elsewhere, in the pre- and early Islamic corpora on the one hand (Blau 1966–1967, 292–95, §188; Bettega and D'Anna 2023, 264), and the modern dialects on the other (Belnap 1991, 86–87; Holes 2016, 334–37; Bettega and D'Anna 2023, 105–7). The use of certain kinds of qualifiers likewise affects target agreement across Arabic corpora, both pre-modern and modern. Relevant to Vat. Ar. 13 is that especially *kull* 'each, every; all' is widely documented as correlating with higher likelihood of FSG agreement (Ritt-Benmimoun 2017, 272, on Tunisian; Bettega 2017, 163, on Omani; Bettega and D'Anna 2023, 95, for discussion of Najdi data and trans-dialectal comparisons). Stokes (2024c, 125) found a similar effect for *kull* and quantifiers with similar meanings, such as *ǧamīʿ* 'all, the whole'.

The matter of plural target agreement—both whether plural agreement occurs and, if so, which plural—is quite complex. Bettega and D'Anna (2023, 162, see especially Table 2.27) show that, in the pre-Islamic *qaṣāʾid* and Quranic corpora on the one hand, and modern gender-distinguishing dialects of Arabic, on the other, FPL target agreement is the type of plural agreement for several groups, including: (1) [+individuated]/[+salient] human female plural controllers, (2) [+individuated]/[+salient] non-human animate plural controllers, and (3) [+individuated]/[+salient] inanimate plural controllers. Interestingly, some early Christian MSS, such as the early theological treatises *Apology* (SAr. 154) and *Summa Theologiae Arabica* (BL 4950), pattern with the *qaṣīdah* and Quranic (and modern dialectal) corpora. But the early Gospel MSS, as well as Vat. Ar. 13, reflect a

system in which FPL agreement is almost totally restricted to plural female human controllers, as we can see in Table 72.

Table 72: Animacy of controllers that trigger FPL agreement[5]

MS	Human PL	Human COLL	Divine	Animal	Inanimate
SAr. 154 (*Apology*)	—	—	—	—	6/6 (100%)
BL 4950 (*Summa*)	4/9 (44%)		—	—	5/9 (56%)
SAr. 74	41/41 (100%)	—	—	—	—
SAr. 72	36/68 (53%)	29/68 (43%)	—	1/68 (2%)	2/68 (2%)
SAr. 75	52/67 (78%)	11/67 (16%)	—	—	4/67 (6%)
SAr. 70	43/51 (84%)	5/51 (10%)	1/51 (2%)	—	2/51 (4%)
Vat. Ar. 13	79/82 (96%)	1/82 (<2%)	—	—	2/82 (>2%)

Each of the early Arabic Gospel MSS attests FPL agreement primarily with human controllers; the chief difference is that in the other Gospel MSS, FPL agreement regularly occurs with human collective nouns, whereas in Vat. Ar. 13 this is virtually never the case. Thus, while the early corpora—including two early Christian theological treatises composed in Arabic—attest FPL with multiple kinds of controllers, the Gospels increasingly attest it only with group (1) of the preceding paragraph. Vat. Ar. 13 is here again the most similar to what becomes normative Classical Arabic of all the early MSS for which we have quantitative data.

Whereas FPL agreement in these MSS is increasingly relegated to targets modifying human female plural controllers, the latter group does not always trigger FPL target agreement. We saw above that, in 9 percent of instances from Vat. Ar. 13, human

[5] Data for SAr. 74, 72, 75, and 70 taken from Stokes (2024c, 124). Data for SAr. 154 and BL 4950 based on my own tallies for the purpose of this study.

female plural controllers trigger MPL agreement. In the other Arabic Gospel MSS, an even greater number of such controllers triggers MPL agreement.

Table 73: Plural target agreement patterns triggered by human female plural controllers[6]

MS	FPL Agreement	MPL Agreement	BPL Agreement
BL 4950 (*Summa*)	3/4 (75%)	1/4 (25%)	—
SAr. 74	41/69 (59%)	28/69 (41%)	—
SAr. 72	31/38 (82%)	2/38 (5%)	5/38 (13%)
SAr. 75	36/48 (75%)	5/48 (10%)	7/48 (15%)
SAr. 70	37/49 (76%)	9/49 (18%)	3/49 (6%)
Vat. Ar. 13	65/75 (87%)	7/75 (9%)	1/75 (<1%)

Stokes (2024c, 145–48) argued that these data represent a change-in-progress, with the MPL (and, with adjectives, the broken plural) expanding at the expense of the FPL. A similar kind of process likely occurred in the ancestors of the modern dialects that lack gender distinction in the plural, where the common plural form is historically MPL (Bettega and D'Anna 2023, 133–38).

The category of dual target agreement is distinct from the previous categories because our direct evidence for it is confined to pre-modern corpora of written Arabic; while modern Arabic dialects retain dual morphology and semantics on nouns, none attests dual agreement with any target category. Dual agreement is by and large consistent in the *qaṣīdah* and Quranic corpora. Hopkins reports that dual agreement occurs alongside both (M)PL and FSG target agreement in the papyri, but unfortunately, reports

[6] Data for SAr. 74, 72, 75, and 70 are taken from Stokes (2024c, 125). Data for BL 4950 are based on my own tallies for the purpose of this study. No human female plural controllers are attested in SAr. 154.

no distributional data (1984, 94–96, §84). The distribution of agreement with dual targets across these early Christian MSS can be seen in Table 74.

Table 74: Agreement patterns with dual controllers across early Christian MSS[7]

MS	DU	MPL/BPL	FPL	FSG	MSG
SAr. 154 (*Apology*)	21/23 (92%)	—	—	2/23 (8%)	—
BL 4950 (*Summa*)	41/49 (84%)	2/49 (4%)	—	3/49 (6%)	3/49 (6%)
SAr. 74	71/113 (63%)	37/113 (33%)	2/113 (<2%)	3/113 (>2%)	—
SAr. 72	76/103 (74%)	22/103 (21%)	2/103 (2%)	3/103 (3%)	—
SAr. 75	113/132 (86%)	3/132 (2%)	16/132 (12%)	—	—
SAr. 70	111/127 (87%)	5/127 (4%)	7/127 (6%)	3/127 (>2%)	1/127 (<1%)
Vat. Ar. 13	221/248 (86%)	17/248 (7%)	3/248 (<2%)	6/248 (>3%)	1/248 (<1%)

When compared with the early Christian MSS, the distribution of agreement patterns with dual controllers is clearly within the general pattern attested across the corpus. Most dual controllers trigger dual agreement; otherwise, plural is more common than singular. MPL is usually, though not always, more common than FPL, the latter being restricted in most MSS to two females. However, in SAr. 75, the MS in which the FPL with dual controllers is by far the most common, it occurs with several inanimate controllers as well. FSG is almost always more common than MSG across the MSS (BL 4950 attests the same number of FSG and MSG targets).

[7] The data for this table is entirely based on my own tallies from the MSS. For SAr. 74, 72, 75, and 70, the data are from the first 25 percent of each MS. The data from SAr. 154 and BL 4950 are, as always, from the entirety of the treatises.

Non-dual agreement with dual controllers is affected by numerous factors, the most significant of which appears to be distance from the controller, which, as with other categories, increases the likelihood of plural agreement the farther from the controller the target occurs. Such an effect of distance on target agreement can be seen in the following examples.

(376) فلما خرجا شاعوه في كل تلك الأرض (SAr. 74, 18v)
f-lmʾ ḫrǧʾ šʾʿw-h fy kl tlk ʾl-ʾrḍ
'But when they left (MDU), they told (MPL) everyone of him in that region'

(377) ارسل يسوع رجلين من تلاميده وقال لهما انطلقا الي هده القريه وتجدا اتان مربوطه ومعها جحش حلوها واتيا بها (SAr. 70, 24v)

ʾrsl yswʿ rǧlyn mn tlʾmyd-h w-qʾl l-hmʾ ʾnṭlqʾ ʾly hdh ʾl-qryh w-tǧdʾ ʾtʾn mrbwṭh w-mʿ-hʾ ǧḥš ḥlw-hʾ w-ʾtyʾ b-hʾ
'Jesus sent two of his disciples and said to them (DU), "Go (DU) to this village and you will find (DU) a colt tied up and a foal with it. Untie (MPL) them and bring (DU) them"'

Singular agreement instead of dual or plural agreement seems primarily to correlate with animacy. I have not identified any pairs of examples in which the same dual controller triggers singular and dual/plural agreement in the early Christian Arabic MSS other than Vat. Ar. 13. Note the following examples from other early Christian MSS, in which singular agreement with series of nouns seems to reflect inanimacy:

(378) لم تزال الخطيه والموت تجري فينا وتقهرنا (SAr. 154, 136v)
lm tzʾl ʾl-ḫṭyh w-ʾl-mwt tǧry fy-nʾ w-tqhr-nʾ
'Sin and death still live (FSG) in us and oppress (FSG) us'

(379) السما والارض تعبُر وكلامى لا يعُبر (SAr. 72, 30r)
ʾl-smʾ w-ʾl-ʾrḍ tʿbur w-klʾm-y lʾ yʿbur
‘Heaven and earth pass away (FSG), but my words will not pass away’

(380) اليس عصفورين يباعان بفلس وواحد منها لا يقع على الارض من دون ابيكم (SAr. 70, 13r)
ʾ-lys ʿṣfwryn ybʾʿn b-fls w-wʾḥd mn-hʾ lʾ yqʿ ʿly ʾl-ʾrḍ mn dwn ʾby-km
‘Are two birds not sold (MDU) for a cent? And not even one of them (FSG) will fall to the ground without your father [knowing]’

(381) فاما ذلك اليوم وتلك الساعه فلا يعرفها احد ولا يطلع عليها (Vat. Ar. 13, 42v)
f-ʾmʾ ḏlk ʾl-ywm w-tlk ʾl-sʾʿh f-lʾ yʿrf-hʾ ʾḥd w-lʾ yṭlʿ ʿly-hʾ
‘But as for that day and that time, no one knows it (FSG) or can discern it (FSG)’

When the dual controller is human, however, the tendency to shift to plural agreement increases:

(382) لتوبيخ اريوس وبولى المفتريين على الله الكلمه بن الله فى اضافتهم اياه الى الخلق (BL 4950, 4r)
l-twbyḫ ʾryws w-bwly ʾl-mftryyn ʿly ʾllh ʾl-klmh bn ʾllh fy ʾḍʾft-hm ʾyʾ-h ʾly ʾl-ḫlq
‘In order to rebuke Arius and Paul [of Samosata] the blasphemers against God the Word, the Son of God, for their (MPL) adding him to creation’

(383) وكانت هناك مريم المجدليه ومريم الاخرا جالسات (SAr. 72, 36r)
w-kʾnt hnʾk mrym ʾl-mǧdlyh w-mrym ʾl-ʾḫrʾ ǧʾlsʾt
‘And Mary Magdalen and the other Mary were both there sitting (FPL)’

The grammars of the scribes that produced these MSS differed in these regards, however. This can be illustrated nicely in the following pair of examples, each of which is the same verse from two MSS that belong to the same translation family (Kashouh's Family A).

(384) اليس عصفورين يباعان بفلسين وواحد منهم لا يقع علي الارض دون ابوكم (SAr. 74, 20v)

ʾ-lys ʿṣfwryn ybʾʿn b-flsyn w-wʾḥd mn-hm lʾ yqʿ ʿly ʾl-ʾrḍ dwn ʾbw-km

'Are two birds not sold (MDU) for two cents? And not even one of them (MPL) falls to the ground without your father [knowing]'

(385) اليس عصفورين يباعان برباط وواحد منهما لا يقع على الارض دون ابوكم (SAr. 72, 13r)

ʾ-lys ʿṣfwryn ybʾʿn b-rbʾṭ w-wʾḥd mn-hmʾ lʾ yqʿ ʿly ʾl-ʾrḍ dwn ʾbw-km

'Are two birds not sold (MDU) for a cent? And not even one of them (MDU) falls to the ground without your father [knowing]'

As mentioned in §1.4 above, we are faced with two possible explanations of the reality underlying the distribution and patterns attested in agreement patterns with dual controllers. One possibility is that the dual was still a living feature in the spoken varieties of the Levant in the late ʾUmayyad and early ʿAbbāsid periods, but was giving way to plural agreement, a process which became total in the ancestors of the modern dialects (Stokes 2024c, 126–27, 144–48, §§3.1.3; 5). In favour of this interpretation is the likelihood that the dual was functional at least on adjectives, verbs, and pronouns in Proto-Arabic (Al-Jallad 2022, 61,

§2.1.2), and therefore was lost in favour of the plural in the ancestors of the modern dialects. In favour of the interpretation of dual agreement as having already been largely supplanted, thereby reflecting engagement with another register, is the fact that in SAr. 74, perhaps the earliest of all the Gospel MSS studied here, the dual, while attested, is significantly less common than in later Gospel MSS. Of course, both SAr. 154 and BL 4950 are also early and attest nearly ubiquitous dual agreement. But in those two MSS, the non-dual agreement with dual controllers is not the same as in the later Gospel MSS. In SAr. 154 and BL 4950, the alternatives to dual agreement are virtually all singular; in the later Gospel MSS, however, the dual alternates most frequently with the plural.

I suggest tentatively, then, that the dual as an agreement category was possibly reduced already to a significant degree in the 8th century CE in living varieties of Arabic, replaced increasingly by the plural. At the same time, it was also clearly prestigious, perhaps due to an association with the language of the Quran (and, over time, the *ʿArabiyyah*). Christian authors seem initially to have made use of it mostly in theological texts in which they address, at least ostensibly, non-local, and even non-Christian, audiences. The language of the Gospels was more frequently vernacularising/colloquialising, especially early on, but over time the dual became increasingly integrated. This engagement led to a dynamic kind of grammatical compromise between different varieties/registers (as suggested by Bellem and Smith 2012). It should be emphasised here, though, that while dual agreement in this scenario can be thought of as prestigious, it is

not binary; there is no reason to posit that scribal authors approached dual agreement through the lens of a binary and simply failed to ubiquitously apply the 'rule'. The same factors at play in (F)SG versus plural agreement with plural controllers seem also to have been at play in dual versus singular/plural agreement.

There are thus continuities and discontinuities among the authors of early Christian texts regarding the category of dual target agreement. First, it is worth stressing again that, whether living or not, the dual is a functional agreement category in the corpus; even in the MS in which it occurs the least with dual controllers (SAr. 74), it still accounts for over half of the agreement patterns. When singular agreement is chosen, it is typically either to indicate [−individuation]/[−saliency], or, increasingly, lower animacy. The plural option differs among the MSS, with a few preferring FPL, but most opting for MPL agreement. This can possibly be interpreted as evidence for the nascent breakdown of dual target agreement, and the expansion of the MPL as the general plural marker. Vat. Ar. 13 sits comfortably in this picture of early Islamic-era variation.

Finally, as we saw in §1.5 above, MPL is an agreement option for non-human controllers, though mostly with humanoid beings like angels and demons. A few cases were seen with body parts, either as a deliberate colloquialism (since each of the six examples occurs in direct speech) or reflecting their prominence and saliency. Such MPL agreement with non-human controllers is well attested in other corpora, pre-modern and modern. Hanitsch's (2024) study of this phenomenon in the Quran identifies 29 instances of such agreement in that corpus. She concludes that

most of these represent one of two strands of development, both of which become more common by the modern dialectal period: (1) metonymy, with an inanimate referent indicative of both the object and humans, and (2) a group of inanimates that are underspecified for animacy, many of which have human-like qualities.

Certainly, divine beings are very human-like and this is likely why they regularly (though not ubiquitously) trigger MPL agreement in Vat. Ar. 13 and other early MSS. The examples with paired body parts could theoretically be cases of metonymy, although I do not think this is as likely, since in each case the distinction is between a person having only one of the paired body parts and entering paradise and retaining both but going into the fire of perdition. Thus, the body parts do not really stand for the person. MPL agreement with non-human controllers occurs in other early Christian corpora as well. In each, MPL targets occur with divine beings, and in three they occur with animal controllers, too. A handful of instances in each occurs with inanimate controllers, some of which provide nice parallels to those Hanitsch adduces from the Quran.

Table 75: Kind and number of non-human controllers that trigger MPL agreement in early Christian MSS

MS	Divine Beings	Animals	Inanimates
SAr. 154	5	—	4
BL 4950	11	—	—
SAr. 74	14	15	3
SAr. 72	9	7	10
SAr. 75	14	11	2
SAr. 70	8	—	9
Vat. Ar. 13	18	—	6

In many cases, the inanimate controller is a city or region that is metonymically linked to the population, thereby naturally triggering MPL agreement:

(386) حينيذ خرجت اليه اروسليم وكل اليهوديه وجميع كوره الاردن وكانوا يصطبغون منه فى نهر الاردن ويعترفون بخطاياهم (SAr. 72, 4v)
ḥynyḏ ḫrğt ʾly-h ʾrwslym w-kl ʾl-yhwdyh w-ğmyʿ kwrh ʾl-ʾrdn w-kʾnwʾ yṣṭbġwn mn-h fy nhr ʾl-ʾrdn w-yʿtrfwn b-ḫṭʾyʾ-hm
'Then Jerusalem, and all of Judea and the whole area around the Jordan river went out (FSG) to meet him. And they were (MPL) being baptised (MPL) by him in the river and acknowledging (MPL) their (MPL) sins'

This is common across the MSS and is the most straightforward kind of metonymy attested therein, though again note its absence in Vat. Ar. 13, where such examples attest a strict syntactic agreement pattern.

Elsewhere, the link is possible and, to use Hanitsch's concept, the animacy is underspecified.

(387) كمثل النفس والجسد والروح لا نفرق بعضهم من بعض (SAr. 154, 100v)
k-mṯl ʾl-nfs w-ʾl-ğsd w-ʾl-rwḥ lʾ nfrq bʿḍ-hm mn bʿḍ
'As with the soul, the body, and the spirit: we do not distinguish them (MPL) from each other'

(388) فاوراه كل مملكات العالم ومجدهم (SAr. 74, 5v)
f-ʾwrʾ-h kl mmlkʾt ʾl-ʿʾlm w-mğd-hm
'And he showed him all of the kingdoms of the earth and their (MPL) glory'

(389) انكم تشبهون القبور المُشيده الدين يروا من خارج حسان ومن داخل محشوه عظام الموتا وكل طمث (SAr. 70, 28r)
ʾn-km tšbhwn ʾl-qbwr ʾl-mušydh ʾldyn yrwʾ mn ḫʾrǧ ḥsʾn w-mn dʾḫl mḥšwh ʿẓʾm ʾl-mwtʾ w-kl ṭmṭ
'You resemble the well-built (FSG) graves, which seem (MPL) from the outside beautiful (BPL) but inside are stuffed (FSG) with the bones of the dead and every filth'

In the first example from the theological treatise *Apology*, the parts of a person—soul, spirit, and body—are by definition underspecified, since they occupy a nebulous state between 'thing' and 'person'. The noun *mmlkʾt* 'kingdoms' likewise could refer to the physical and material wealth of these kingdoms, but also to their populations. The final example is interesting because the controller *qbwr* 'graves' triggers FSG agreement with adjectives, but plural agreement with the relative pronoun and verb. A close connection between graves and the dead people inside could lead to this ambiguity between inanimate and (at least categorically) animate.

In one or two places, though, as mentioned above, inanimates are conceptualised as acting, thereby presumably increasing their similarity to humans and trigger MPL agreement, as in the following examples.

(390) من هو هذا الذي الريح والبحر يطيعوه (SAr. 74, 16r)
mn hw hḏʾ ʾlḏy ʾl-ryḥ w-ʾl-bḥr yṭyʿw-h
'Who is this that even the wind and the sea obey (MPL) him'

(391) السماوات والارض يجوزون وكلامي لا يجوز (SAr. 70, 29v)
ʾl-smʾwʾt w-ʾl-ʾrḍ yǧwzwn w-klʾm-y lʾ yǧwz

> 'The heavens and the earth pass away, but my words will not pass away'

Relative to the Quranic evidence, on the one hand, and the other early Christian MSS included here, on the other, Vat. Ar. 13, along with the theological treatise *Summa Theologiae Arabica*, only sparingly attests MPL agreement with non-human controllers, reserving it mostly for the most humanoid of controllers, namely divine beings.

3.2. Pre-Controller Data

There is in Arabic a general tendency across all corpora—premodern and modern, written and spoken—for pre-controller targets to agree with controllers in gender but not number, with the target singular even when modifying plural controllers (for modern dialects, see Brustad 2000, 67; on pre- and early Islamic corpora, see Bettega and D'Anna 2023, 145–52, §2.3.9). The grammarians treat this as the default, contrasting it with a phenomenon in unspecified dialects that they call *ʾakalūnī l-barāġīṯ* 'the fleas bit/ate me', in which number agreement was the norm. The early Quranic commentator ʾAbū ʿUbaydah (d. 207 AH/822 CE) considered this phenomenon to be typical of less formal registers (Guillaume 2011, 283–84). And indeed, it is not present at all in the *muʿallaqāt*, nor in the Quran, except for two marginal instances;[8] otherwise, singular pre-controller verbal agreement is ubiquitous in both corpora.

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[8] Bettega and D'Anna (2023, 163–64, n. 146) address the two Quranic verses in question (Q21.3 and Q21.71). They conclude that since both occur following a string of plural targets (which were post-controller),

Full number agreement with pre-controller verbal targets is, however, an attested phenomenon in writing from the early Islamic period. Hopkins (1984, 138) reports only two instances of pre-controller verbal agreement in the plural. It is more widespread in the early Christian Arabic corpus of MSS. Blau notes this, but unfortunately makes somewhat contradictory claims that do not clarify its frequency or distribution, stating at one point that "[t]here exists a marked tendency to bring the preceding verb into strict concord in number with its subject," but also that "...at least partly through the influence of CA [= Classical Arabic], even verbs preceding subjects denoting several *persons*... remain in the singular" (1966–1967, 275, emphasis original). Stokes (2024c) offered quantitative analysis of number agreement with pre-controller verbal targets in the five Christian MSS included in that study. In Table 76 (facing page), a comparison of singular versus plural agreement with pre-controller verbal targets from those five MSS, Vat. Ar. 13, as well as SAr. 154 is provided.

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these can be considered instances of attraction. While this is likely true, it is worth making the point explicitly that if such attraction were to occur in a Christian (or Judaeo-)Arabic MS, it would count as a 'Middle Arabic' feature. However, its presence in the Quran has not landed the latter text in anyone's category of 'Middle Arabic', for likely obvious reasons.

Table 76: Singular versus plural agreement with pre-controller verbal targets in early Christian MSS[9]

MS	SG	PL
SAr. 154 (*Apology*)	78/87 (90%)	9/87 (10%)
BL 4950 (*Summa*)	54/57 (95%)	3/57 (5%)
SAr. 74	76/110 (69%)	34/110 (31%)
SAr. 72	75/150 (50%)	75/150 (50%)
SAr. 75	128/163 (79%)	35/163 (21%)
SAr. 70	117/146 (80%)	29/146 (20%)
Vat. Ar. 13	318/337 (94%)	19/337 (6%)

While Vat. Ar. 13 is very close to attesting the obligatory singular 'deflected' agreement pattern characteristic of the *muʿallaqāt* and Quran, it is not unique in this among early Christian MSS. In fact, the theological treatises *Apology* (SAr. 154) and *Summa Theologiae Arabica* (BL 4950) both attest nearly ubiquitous singular agreement with pre-controller verbal targets. The two Gospel MSS from Kashouh's Family A, SAr. 74 and SAr. 72, attest something much closer to the modern dialectal distribution, with the tendency for pre-verbal controllers to be singular but with plural triggered by various pragmatic considerations (on which, see Brustad 2000, 67–69, §2.3.2, and further bibliography therein).

Among those singular pre-controller verbal targets, MSG and FSG agreement are once again not evenly distributed. The distinction between MSG and FSG in Vat. Ar. 13 occasionally varies depending on individuation/saliency, with MSG representing the least individuated, less even than FSG. With human collective controllers, agreement is often syntactic, that is, dependent on the

[9] Data for SAr. 74, 72, 75 and 70, as well as BL 4950, are from Stokes (2024c, 142, Table 27). The data for SAr. 154 are based on my own tallies of the data for the purposes of this study.

morphology of the noun, with morphologically MSG collectives triggering MSG verbal agreement and morphologically FSG and broken plural nouns triggering FSG verbal agreement. Elsewhere, it seems to be dependent on animacy, with nouns lower on the animacy hierarchy more likely to trigger FSG agreement than nouns higher up the animacy hierarchy. As is shown in Table 77 below, the same general trends are also operative in the other early Christian MSS as well.

Table 77: MSG versus FSG pre-controller verbal targets of plural controllers across early Christian MSS[10]

MS	MSG/FSG	Human	Human COLL	Divine	Animal	Inanimate
SAr. 154 (*Apology*)	MSG	20 (71%)	23 (79%)	2 (40%)	1 (100%)	5 (36%)
	FSG	8 (29%)	6 (21%)	3 (60%)	—	9 (64%)
BL 4950 (*Summa*)	MSG	8 (53%)	11 (85%)	—	—	2 (11%)
	FSG	7 (47%)	2 (15%)	4 (100%)	—	16 (89%)
SAr. 74	MSG	16 (64%)	8 (40%)	—	2 (50%)	4 (20%)
	FSG	9 (36%)	12 (60%)	3 (100%)	2 (50%)	16 (80%)
SAr. 72	MSG	22 (73%)	8 (47%)	—	3 (75%)	8 (36%)
	FSG	8 (27%)	9 (53%)	1 (100%)	1 (25%)	14 (64%)
SAr. 75	MSG	74 (97%)	12 (71%)	1 (100%)	2 (33%)	9 (29%)
	FSG	2 (2%)	5 (29%)	—	4 (67%)	22 (71%)
SAr. 70	MSG	37 (58%)	10 (48%)	—	2 (50%)	5 (21%)
	FSG	27 (42%)	11 (52%)	4 (100%)	2 (50%)	19 (79%)
Vat. Ar. 13	MSG	145 (91%)	79 (84%)	2 (50%)	3 (50%)	10 (19%)
	FSG	15 (9%)	15 (16%)	2 (50%)	3 (50%)	42 (81%)

In each MSS, human plural controllers trigger MSG pre-controller verbal agreement more frequently than FSG, likely strict syntactic agreement based on the morphology of the noun. In

[10] The stats for each MS in this table reflect tallies I made directly from the MSS for purposes of this study.

others instances, as in Vat. Ar. 13, the distinction between the two seems to be one of individuation/saliency, with MSG representing the lowest degree of individuation/saliency, and FSG slightly higher. This is perhaps especially the case in SAr. 70, though agency specifically seems to play a role in the distinction in that MS. Note the following pair of examples.

(392) فخرج عبيده اوليك الي الطرق وجمعوا كل من وجدوا اشرارا واخيارا (SAr. 70, 26v)
f-ḫrǧ ʿbyd-h ʾwlyk ʾly ʾl-ṭrq w-ǧmʿwʾ kl mn wǧdwʾ ʾšrʾarʾ w-ʾḫyʾrʾ
'And those slaves of his went (MSG) into the roads and gathered everyone they were able to find, evil and good'

(393) فقالت له عبيده تحب نذهب ننقيه (SAr. 70, 16v)
f-qʾlt l-h ʿbyd-h tḥb nḏhb nnqy-h
'And his slaves said (FSG) to him, "Do you want us to go and pick it?"'

In the first example, the subject, *ʿbyd* 'slaves', goes out and gathers, but is otherwise indistinct and can be thought of as [−individuation]. In the second, however, while still relatively un-individuated, the group speaks, and thus gains a degree of textual prominence and narrative significance, and even agency, all of which work together to trigger FSG instead of the completely generic MSG agreement. This is attested with other frequently occurring nouns in SAr. 70 as well. For example, the noun *tlʾmyḏ* 'disciples', triggers both MSG and FSG roughly equally; however, FSG occurs when the primary action of the group is speaking (this effect of speaking is seen in the previous examples from SAr. 70 above as well).

(394) قالت له تلاميده من اين لنا في هده البريه خبُز نشبع هدا الجمع كله (SAr. 70, 19v)
qʾlt l-h tlmyd-h mn ʾyn l-nʾ fy hdh ʾl-bryh ḫubz nšbʿ hdʾ ʾl-ǧmʿ kl-h
'They his disciples said (FSG) to him, "Where will we get bread enough to satiate this whole crowd in the desert?"'

(395) فدنت منه تلاميده وقالت له لاي ذاك بالامثال تكلمهم (SAr. 70, 21v)
f-dnt mn-h tlʾmyḏ-h w-qʾlt l-h l-ʾy ḏʾk b-ʾl-ʾmṯʾl tklm-hm
'Then they came near (FSG) to him and said (FSG) to him, "Why do you thus speak to them in proverbs?"'

(396) صعد يسوع الي السفينه صعد معه تلاميده (SAr. 70, 10v)
ṣʿd ysw ʿ ʾly ʾl-sfynh ṣʿd mʿ-h tlʾmyd-h
'Jesus got into the boat [and] his disciples got in (MSG) with him'

(397) ونظر التلاميد وعجبوا وقالوا كيف يبست هده التينه من ساعتها (SAr. 70, 25v)
w-nẓr ʾl-tlʾmyd w-ʿǧbwʾ w-qʾlwʾ kyf ybst hdh ʾl-tynh mn sʾʿt-hʾ
'And the disciples saw (MSG) and were amazed, and said "How did this fig tree dry up immediately?"'

While a few possible examples of a semantic contrast between FSG and MSG agreement can be found in the other MSS, the majority of instances of FSG and MSG agreement with human plural controllers can be characterised as free variation. The following two pairs of examples are illustrative of the kind of variation that occurs across most MSS.

(398) فقال احبار اليهود للمسيح لا تسمع ما يقولون هاولي (SAr. 154, 125v)
f-qʾl ʾḥbʾr ʾl-yhwd l-l-msyḥ lʾ tsmʿ mʾ yqwlwn hʾwly
'And the Jewish religious leaders said (MSG) to the Messiah, "Do you not hear what these people are saying?"'

(399) ولقد اجتمعت احبار اليهود على الحواريون فقالوا لهم (SAr. 154, 110v)
l-qd ʾǧtmʿt ʾḥbʾr ʾl-yhwd ʿly ʾl-ḥwʾrywn f-qʾlwʾ l-hm
'The Jewish religious leaders gathered (FSG) against the disciples and said to them...'

(400) فلما سمع التلاميذ بهتوا جدا (SAr. 74, 42v)
f-lmʾ smʿ ʾl-tlʾmyḏ bhtwʾ ǧdʾ
'Then when the disciples heard (MSG), they were greatly amazed'

(401) تقدمت اليه تلاميذه وفتح {فاه} وكان يعلمهم قايلا (SAr. 74, 6v-7r)
tqdmt ʾly-h tlʾmyḏ-h w-ftḥ {fʾ-h} w-kʾn yʿlm-hm qʾylʾ
'His disciples came (FSG) to him, and he opened his mouth and was teaching them, saying...'

It is possible that some aspect of the pragmatics of the narrative in each case led to the preference for MSG or FSG agreement, but I was not able to find pairs of examples that clearly demonstrate what those pragmatic or semantic factors might be.

Worth noting is that while FSG agreement with plural inanimate controllers is clearly the norm, each MS attests a minority of cases in which MSG agreement occurs. The overwhelming majority of instances of MSG agreement, however, involve the verbs *kān* 'he/it was', and *ṣār* 'it/he was, became', as well as the negator *laysa* 'it/he is not', and typically express existential or possessive predications in which the distance between the verbal head and the controller is increased. These account statistically for the largest share of MSG agreement with plural inanimate controllers.

In SAr. 154, for example, three out of five (60 percent) instances of MSG agreement with inanimates occur in such constructions.[11] The following examples are illustrative.

(402) لقد كان لبنى اسرايل عيون كثيره في ارضهم (SAr. 154, 136v–137r)
l-qd kʾn l-bny ʾsrʾyl ʿywn kṯyrh fy ʾrḍ-hm
'The sons of Israel had (MSG) many eyes in their land'

(403) ليس له خطيه ولا اثم (SAr. 154, 132r)
lys l-h ḫṭyh w-lʾ ʾṯm
'He has (MSG) neither sin nor iniquity'

(404) صار له اسما ونسب من ذلك (BL 4950, 20v)
ṣʾr l-h ʾsmʾ w-nsb mn ḏlk
'He obtained (MSG) a name and lineage from that'

(405) من كان له اذنين ليسمع فليسمع (SAr. 74, 74v)
mn kʾn l-h ʾḏnyn l-ysmʿ f-l-ysmʿ
'Whoever has (MSG) two ears to hear, let him hear'

(406) لانه لو كان فى سدوم القوات التى كانت فيك اذن مكثت حتى اليوم (SAr. 72, 14r)
l-ʾn-h lw kʾn fy sdwm ʾl-qwʾt ʾlty kʾnt fy-k ʾḏn mkṯt ḥty ʾl-ywm
'Because if the wonders that have happened among you had happened (MSG) in Sodom, then it would have remained until today'

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[11] 2/2 (100%) examples from BL 4950; 6/8 (75%) examples from SAr. 74; 6/8 (75%) examples from SAr. 72; 7/9 (78%) examples from SAr. 75; 4/5 (80%) examples from SAr. 70; and 7/10 (70%) examples from Vat. Ar. 13. These data are based on my own tallies for the purpose of this study.

(407) فقالوا له ليس لنا هاهنا الا خمسه ارغفه وحوتين فقال لهم يسوع اتوني بهم هاهنا (SAr. 75, 15v)

f-qʾlwʾ l-h lys l-nʾ hʾhnʾ ʾlʾ ḫmsh ʾrġfh w-ḥwtyn f-qʾl l-hm ysw‘ ʾtw-ny b-hm hʾhnʾ

‘Then they said, “We only have (MSG) five loaves and two fish with us.” And he said to them, “bring them here”’

(408) وليس عليك ثياب العرس (SAr. 70, 26v)

w-lys ‘ly-k ṯyʾb ʾl-‘rs

‘You are not wearing (lit. ‘there are not (MSG) on you’) wedding clothes’

This gender neutralisation in VSO contexts is a well-known and amply documented phenomenon in Arabic corpora from the earliest period to the modern dialects (for Classical Arabic, see, among many others, Russell 1984; Ferguson 1989; Fassi Fehri 1988, 133; on non-human controllers in the Quran, see Hanitsch 2023; and on modern dialects, see Brustad 2000, 67–69). In her detailed study of gender agreement patterns in VSO verbs with non-human controllers in the Quran, Hanitsch (2023) identifies four (interconnected and interacting) factors that tend to increase the likelihood of MSG, instead of FSG, agreement: (1) increased distance between verb and controller, (2) FPL instead of broken plural (which instead correlates with FSG agreement) nominal morphology, (3) singular forms that are lexically MSG, and (4) inanimate rather than non-human animate referents.

In Vat. Ar. 13, as we saw previously, two of these—‘actual’ distance and type of plural—are significant, though the former seems to be the primary factor in most examples. While the other Christian MSS attest distributions that are suggestive, only the

data and distributions attested in the Quran (p = .0020) and Vat. Ar. 13 (p = .0001) rise to the level of statistical significance.[12]

Table 78: Impact of plural type on MSG versus FSG pre-controller verbal agreement

Source	**MSG/FSG**	**BPL/Paucal**	**Sound FPL**
Quran	MSG	27 (12%)	14 (31%)
	FSG	207 (88%)	31 (69%)
SAr. 154	MSG	8 (57%)	0
	FSG	6 (43%)	3 (100%)
BL 4950	MSG	2 (10%)	0
	FSG	18 (90%)	1 (100%)
SAr. 74	MSG	1 (1%)	—
	FSG	20 (95%)	—
SAr. 72	MSG	1 (7%)	1 (50%)
	FSG	14 (93%)	1 (50%)
SAr. 75	MSG	5 (21%)	1 (25%)
	FSG	19 (79%)	3 (75%)
SAr. 70	MSG	3 (12%)	1 (50%)
	FSG	22 (88%)	1 (50%)
Vat. Ar. 13	MSG	3 (7%)	6 (75%)
	FSG	41 (93%)	2 (25%)

One note of relevance is that, by the time the early Christian MSS studied here were written, most inanimate plural controllers attest broken plural rather than sound FPL morphology.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that Brustad (2000, 67) identifies verbs that are part of idioms the subjects of which are intended to express time among contexts that favour gender neutralisation in pre-controller verbs and that, thus, tend to occur

[12] Data for the Quran are taken from Hanitsch (2023, 34). Note that her numbers are based on the reading of Ḥafṣ ʿan ʿĀṣim. Data from all other MSS are based on tallies I made from the MSS for the purposes of this study.

with generalised MSG agreement. As we saw in Vat. Ar. 13, Hand B in several instances attests forms in which verbal clauses that express the passage of time attest gender neutralisation.

(409) فلما كان ست ساعات (Vat. Ar. 13, 74r)
f-lmʾ kʾn st sʾˁt
'And when it was (MSG) six o'clock...'

(410) وكان قد مضا من النهار حين صلبوه ثلث ساعات (Vat. Ar. 13, 74r)
w-kʾn qd mḍʾ mn ʾl-nhʾr ḥyn ṣlbw-h ṯlṯ sʾˁt
'And when three hours had passed (MSG) from the time when they crucified him...'

It is likely that 'actual' distance, the use of *kān*, and the expressions of time interact to increase the tendency for MSG instead of FSG agreement.

CHAPTER 8. SYNTAX

Syntax in general is an under-studied domain of the grammar of Arabic, especially of Christian and Judaeo-Arabic manuscripts, which are typically examined only insofar as they differ from what is presumed to be normative for Classical Arabic. Further, translations are afforded even less attention in the area of syntax due to the assumption that any deviations from the purported standard are due only to translation effect from the language of the *Vorlage*, without considering the possibility that they represent genuine witnesses to varieties or registers of Arabic (Blau 1966–1967, 20, §1.3; Vollandt 2018, 453–55, §§4–5). As Stokes (2024a; 2024b) shows, however, many of these features show little to no translation effect and, in any event, such an effect must be demonstrated rather than assumed. While this chapter does not pretend to be an exhaustive study of the syntax of Vat. Ar. 13, let alone capture the diversity of comparable early Arabic manuscripts, the goal is to highlight aspects of syntax that attest variation both within and across MSS from this period. As we will see, in each case, the variation attested can be sensibly interpreted within what we know of Arabic historically, and in the context of the variation attested in these sources, without any need to appeal to substrate or translation effect.

1.0. Negation

Several negative particles occur in Vat. Ar. 13, with verbal negation characterised by a plurality of negators depending on the clause type. The attested particles, along with their contexts and semantics, are listed in Table 79 (overleaf).

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Table 79: List of negators and their contexts

Negator	Usages	Negates
لا	+ imperfect	present/continuous/future
	+ jussive/imperfect	imperative
	+ energic	imperative
	+ noun	absolute
لا...ولا ولا	+ imperfect + nominal clause	neither… nor
كيلا / لكيلا / لكي لا	+ imperfect	purpose
ألا	+ imperfect	verbal complements & subordinate clauses
ليلا	+ imperfect	purpose
لولا ان	+ noun w/ verbal clause	irrealis
ما	+ perfect	past/present perfect
	+ imperfect	present
	+ nominal clause	nominal clause
أو ما / أفما / أما	+ imperfect	interrogative present/ continuous/imminent future
	+ perfect	interrogative past/ present perfect
ليس	+ nominal clause	nominal clause
	+ imperfect	present/future
	+ perfect	past
اليس	+ nominal clause	interrogative nominal clause
لم	+ apocopate/imperfect	past/present perfect/ protasis and apodosis
لن	+ subjunctive/imperfect	future/future in apodosis
إيّا + ضمير أن	+ imperfect	warning/negative imperative

Note that, for *lā* + jussive, *lam* + jussive, and *lan* + subjunctive, I have also listed the imperfect, based on the distribution detailed above in ch. 6. I likewise use 'imperfect' in the box below to stand for both 'indicative' and 'subjunctive'.

Each negator listed here is known and well attested in other contemporaneous Arabic corpora, and the distribution of most is typical of later Classical norms.

Lā is the most commonly-used negator, especially of verbs, typically negating the present—simple or present continuous—and the future.

(411) ولكم اذان ثم انتم لا تسمعون بها ولا تفكرون (59v)
w-l-km ʾḏʾn ṯm ʾntm lʾ tsmʿwn b-hʾ w-lʾ tfkrwn
'And you have ears, but then you do not hear with them nor do you consider [what you have heard]'

(412) وانتم فلا تلجونها ولا تصلون الي شى من نعيمها (39r)
w-ʾntm f-lʾ tlǧwn-hʾ w-lʾ tṣlwn ʾly šy mn nʿym-hʾ
'But you, you will neither find refuge in it nor arrive at its respite'

The continuous aspect in the past relative to the narrative is also within the domain of the imperfect, and *lā* can negate this as well.

(413) فكان ايسوع ساكتا لا ينطق ولم يجبه شيا (72v)
f-kʾn ʾysw' sʾktʾ lʾ ynṭq w-lm yǧb-h šyʾ
'But Jesus was quiet, not speaking, and he did not answer him [Caiaphus] at all'

When followed by a non-indicative imperfect, *lā* can indicate a negative imperative:

(414) اجعلوا الان الاثمار الدي توافق التوبه ولا تطنوا وتقولوا في انفسكم ان ابانا ابرهيم (2v)

ʾǧʿlwʾ ʾl-ʾn ʾl-ʾṯmʾr ʾldy twʾfq ʾl-twbh w-lʾ tẓnwʾ w-tqwlwʾ fy ʾnfs-km ʾn ʾbʾ-nʾ ʾbrhym

'Now, produce the fruit that befits repentance, and do not believe and say to yourselves, "Our father is Abraham"'

Lā can categorically negate a noun (for the variation in case on the subject of these negated clauses, see Ch. 5, §4.0). Combinations of other particles with the negator *lā* include *ʾallā* to negate subordinated verbs, including verbal complements, as well as *li-ʾallā*, *kay-lā*, and *likay-lā* to indicate negative purpose clauses, and *(lā) wa-lā*, which negates subsequent elements of the sentence.

(415) فَصلوا ليلا تدخلُوا في التجارب (53r)

fa-ṣlwʾ lylʾ tdḫlūʾ fy ʾl-tǧʾrb

'Therefore, pray so that you do not fall into temptation'

(416) لكيلا يقع في الشعب فتنه (70v)

lkylʾ yqʿ fy ʾl-šʿb ftnh

'So that a riot does not brew among the crowd'

(417) اما انا فليس في كل حين بينكم ولا عندكم (71r)

ʾmʾ ʾnʾ f-lys fy kl ḥyn byn-km w-lʾ ʿnd-km

'But as for me, I am neither always among you nor always with you'

Much less frequent, but more varied in usage, is the negating function of *mā*. It can occur with either the imperfect to negate the present/future (11 times) or the perfect to negate the past/present perfect (15 times). In both cases, however, it is mostly restricted to interrogative contexts, typically consisting of *ʾa* (*fa*) *mā* + verb:

(418) ما راي قط احد مثل هذه الجريحه (13v)
mʾ rʾy qṭ ʾḥd mṯl hḏh ʾl-ǧryḥh
‘No one has ever seen a miracle like this’

(419) اما ترون هذه الاشيا كلها (41r)
ʾ-mʾ trwn hḏh ʾl-ʾšyʾ kl-hʾ
‘Do you not see all of these things?’

(420) افما يقدر ان يحي نفسه (49v)
ʾ-f-mʾ yqdr ʾn yḥy nfs-h
‘Is he not able to save himself?’

(421) اما تجيب الان شيا (73r)
ʾ-mʾ tǧyb ʾl-ʾn šyʾ
‘Will you not respond at all now?’

(422) اما قراتم ما صنع داود اذ عرث هو ومن كان معه (17v)
ʾ-mʾ qrʾtm mʾ ṣnʿ dʾwd ʾḏ ġrṯ hw w-mn kʾn mʿ-h
‘Have you not read what David did when he and those who were with him got hungry?’

In a single example, the disciple Peter is addressing a woman who claims he was with Jesus. He responds using *mā* to negate the imperfect without an interrogative meaning.

(423) كلَّا ما اعلم مَا تقولين (51r)
kllā mʾ ʾʿlm mā tqwlyn
‘I swear I do not know what you are saying!’

This usage could be an example of intentional usage of a colloquialism in direct speech. Two bits of evidence support this supposition. First, in the narrative, the addressees rely on Peter’s accent as evidence of his Galilean origin. Second, this is the only place where *mā* + verb occurs outside of the interrogative syntagms mentioned above.

In two places, both in contexts of direct speech, *mā* occurs followed by a nominal clause. In one, the meaning is apparently a negative interrogative, 'are you not…?', whereas in the other, the context points to straightforward negation, although a non-negated interrogative meaning cannot be ruled out.

(424) وَقال له ما انت ملك اليهوُد (50r)
wa-qʾl l-h mʾ ʾnt mlk ʾl-yhūd
'And he said to him, "Are you not the king of the Jews?"'

(425) ما لك ولذلك البَرّ (50v)
mʾ l-k w-l-ḏlk ʾl-barr
'Do not have anything to do with that innocent man'[1]

Other than these examples, however, there is little evidence in the grammar of Vat. Ar. 13 of a shift to generalised *mā*.

Whereas *mā* negates the past mostly in interrogative contexts, the verbal negator *lam* is commonly attested, always followed by an imperfect (and, as we saw in Ch. 6, §2.0, typically, though not always, followed by a morphological apocopate when the distinction is evident in spelling), and negates the simple past

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[1] Instead of 'what do you have to do with him?' I favour the interpretation of the *mā* here as a negator because of the context, in which, after sending Pilate this message, his wife says:

لان قد صلبت اليوم في حلمِي من اجلهِ اشياَ كثيره

l-ʾn-y qd ṣlbt ʾl-ywm fy ḥlmī mn ʾǧl-hi ʾšyāʾ kṯyrh

'Because I have suffered many things in a dream today about him'

Thus, the context suggests that she is instructing him not to have anything to do with Jesus, rather than asking him whether he has any business dealing with him.

or the present perfect in non-interrogative contexts. Indeed, numerically it is by far the most common means of negating the past.

(426) فلم يجبهُ ايسوع البته (50r)
f-lm yǧb-hu ʾysw‘ ʾl-bth
‘But Jesus did not reply to him at all’

(427) لم يستاجرنا احد (32v)
lm yst’ǧr-n’ ʾḥd
‘No one has hired us’

The semi-verb negator *laysa* can be described as negating three kinds of predication: nominal, verbal, and sentential.

1.1. Nominal

(428) لست يا هدا بمسرح عن ملكوت الله (69r)
lst y’ hd’ b-mntzḥ ‘n mlkwt ʾllh
‘You are not far from the kingdom of God’

1.2. Verbal

(429) ليس يبقا هاهنا حجر علي حجر (69v)
lys ybq’ h’hn’ ḥǧr ‘ly ḥǧr
‘A stone will not remain here on top of another stone’

1.3. Sentential

(430) اليس انما قاطعتني علي دينر (33r)
ʾ-lys ʾnm’ q’ṭ‘t-ny ‘ly dynr
‘Is it not the case that you agreed with me to do the work for a dinar?’

When *laysa* negates a verb, it virtually always negates an imperfect, and more commonly the present (24/30, 80 percent of instances) than the future (6/30, 20 percent of instances).

(431) ليس يحتاج الاصحا الي متطبب (79r)
lys yḥtʾğ ʾl-ʾṣḥʾ ʾly mtṭbb
'The healthy do not need a doctor'

(432) والحق اقول لكَ انكَ لست تخرج من هناكَ حتي تودي كل فلس عليكَ (4v)
w-ʾl-ḥq ʾqwl l-ka ʾn-ka lst tḫrğ mn hnʾka ḥty twdy kl fls ʿly-ka
'Truly I tell you that you will not leave from there [prison] until you repay every penny you owe'

In one place, however, *laysa* negates the past tense with a perfect verb, though this could be analysed as a sort of negated cleft construction.

(433) فليس هكذا كانا (31r)
f-lys hkḏʾ kʾnʾ
'For they were not always like this'

Across Arabic corpora, *laysa* can either inflect as a suffix conjugation, regardless of tense/aspect, thereby displaying person/gender/number agreement with the controller, or it can manifest as an invariable *laysa*. In Vat. Ar. 13, there is evidence for both inflectional and invariable manifestations. Of the 42 instances where conjugation, or the lack thereof, can be clearly categorised (i.e., contexts in which the controller is not 3MSG), over half—23/42 (55 percent)—are conjugated. The data is broken down in Table 80 (facing page). Note that the 'undetermined' category represents instances of 3MSG *laysa* where the controller is MSG.

Table 80: Conjugated versus invariable *laysa*, whole MS

	Conjugated	Unconjugated	Undetermined
laysa	23	19	63

When we break down the number of conjugated versus unconjugated instances of *laysa* by type of predication, we find that most examples of invariable 3MSG agreement occur in negative cleft constructions, including to negate existential predication, which is in keeping with what we noticed about the broader trends of generalised 3MSG forms of verbs like *kān*, *ṣār*, etc (ch. 7, §3.2).

Table 81: Conjugated versus unconjugated *laysa* by predication type

Predication	Conjugated	Unconjugated
Nominal	15/21 (71%)	6/21 (29%)
Verbal	8/12 (67%)	4/12 (33%)
Sentential/Existential	0/9	9/9 (100%)

Note the following examples of invariable *laysa* to negate sentential and existential predicates:

(434) ليس كصسعى بهذه البينه يصنعون قط بل لو قلم لهذا الحبل زل من مكانك وقع فى البحر فعل ذلك (35r)

lys k-ṣnyʿt-y b-hḏh ʾl-tynh tṣnʿwn qṭ bl lw qltm l-hḏ̱ʾ ʾl-ǧbl zl mn mkʾn-k w-qʿ fy ʾl-bḥr fʿl ḏ̱lk

'It is not that you will merely do what I have done to this fig tree, but if you said to this mountain, "Go up from your place and fall in the sea!", it would do it'

(435) ليس عندنا هاهنا الا خمسه قرص وحوتان (23v)

lys ʿnd-nʾ hʾhnʾ ʾlʾ ḫmsh qrṣ w-ḥwtʾn

'We only have five loaves and two fishes here with us'

Inflecting *laysa* in verbal and nominal clauses include the following.

(436) ولست اطلب الذبايح (17v)
w-lst ʾṭlb ʾl-ḏbʾyḥ
‘I do not request sacrifices’

(437) لستما تعلمان ما تسلان (65v)
lstmʾ tʿlmʾn mʾ tslʾn
‘You (DU) do not know what you ask’

(438) الستم انتم بذلك احري (7r)
ʾ-lstm ʾntm b-ḏlk ʾḥry
‘Are you all not more important than that?’

(439) ولستم انتم المتكلمين بل روح القدس (69v)
w-lstm ʾntm ʾl-mtklmyn bl rwḥ ʾl-qds
‘You are not the ones who speak, rather the Holy Spirit is’

Examples of instances of non-inflecting *laysa* in verbal and nominal clauses include.

(440) ليس عطيه ذلك الي (65v)
lys ʿṭyh ḏlk ʾl-y
‘Giving that is not for me’

(441) اما انا فليس في كل حين بينكم ولا عندكم (71r)
ʾmʾ ʾnʾ f-lys fy kl ḥyn byn-km w-lʾ ʿnd-km
‘But as for me, I am not always with you or among you’

(442) الاموات اذا انبعثوا ليس يترجون النسا ولا النسا ايضا يترجون الرحال (68v)
ʾl-ʾmwʾt ʾḏʾ ʾnbʿṯwʾ lys ytzǧwn ʾl-nsʾ w-lʾ ʾl-nsʾ ʾyḍʾ ytzǧwn ʾl-rǧʾl
‘The dead, when they are raised from the dead, they will not marry women, nor will women marry men’

(443) ليس شجره صالحه تثمر ثمارا خبيثه رديه ولا شجره خبيثه رديه تقدر على ان تثمر ثمارا صالحه (81r–82v)

lys šǧrh ṣʾlḥh tṯmr ṯmʾrʾ ḫbyṯh rdyh w-lʾ šǧrh ḫbyṯh rdyh tqdr ʿly ʾn tṯmr ṯmʾrʾ ṣʾlḥh

'A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor is a bad tree able to produce good fruit'

The distribution of conjugated versus unconjugated forms of *laysa* is also not even across the MS; rather, they tend to cluster in the two earliest scribal hands, Hand A and Hand B, as we see in Table 82.

Table 82: Conjugated versus unconjugated forms of *laysa* by scribal hand

Hand	Conjugated	Unconjugated
A	10/24 (42%)	14/24 (58%)
B	4/8 (50%)	4/8 (50%)
C	3/4 (75%)	1/4 (25%)
D	6/6 (100%)	0/6

The earlier hands attest inflecting and invariable *laysa* about equally, whereas the later hands, especially Hand D, inflects *laysa* ubiquitously.

The inflection, or lack thereof, of *laysa* has often occupied a significant place in scholarship that has distinguished between Classical and Middle Arabic, with *laysa* in the former purportedly fully inflectional but increasingly invariable in the latter (Reckendorf 1921, 40; Blau 1978; 1999, 87; Hopkins 1984, 153, §156). The shift is therefore conceived of as one from an earlier stage, in which *laysa* is fully inflected, regardless of syntax, and a later stage, in which the 3MSG form is generalised (Blau 1966–1967, 305–8, §204): $*laysa^{+\text{inflecting}} > laysa^{-\text{inflecting}}$. However, both the

ʿArabiyyah and later Classical Arabic, as well as the Quran, attest invariable *laysa*, especially to negate existential predication, as well as for sentential negation.

(444) لَيْسَ لَهَا مِن دُونِ اللّٰهِ كَاشِفَةٌ (Q53.58)
laysa la-hā min dūni llāhi kāšifatun
'None but Allah can disclose it' (lit. 'It (FSG) [the approaching hour] does not have a revealer except for Allah')

(445) ليس عن هذا نسألك (from Fischer 2002, §323b)
laysa ʿan hāḏā nasʾalu-ka
'We are not asking you about that'

(446) لَيْسَ هُم فِي أَمْرِ عَلِي مِثْلَنَا (from Reckendorf 1921, 47)
laysa hum fī ʾamri ʿalī miṯla-nā
'They [are] not [involved] in the matter of Ali as we [are]'

As we have seen, these are the kinds of predication that are most likely to trigger invariable *laysa* in Vat. Ar. 13. And this appears to be true of other early Christian Arabic MSS as well. While uninflected *laysa* is indeed the norm in each of the three types of predication—nominal, verbal, and existential/sentential—the inflected form can occur in nominal and verbal predications, but I have not found an instance in existential/sentential predications. Note the following examples from SAr. 72.

1.4. Nominal Clause

(447) ليست بصغيره في ملك يهودا (SAr. 72, 3v)
lyst b-ṣġyrh fy mlk yhwdʾ
'You are not least in the ruling of Judah'

1.5. Verbal Clause

(448) ليست اشا لكى لا يصعفوا فى الطريق (SAr. 72, 19v)
lyst ʾšʾ lky lʾ yḍʿfwʾ fy ʾl-ṭryq
'I do not want them to grow faint along the way'

1.6. Existential/Sentential

(449) ليس ما يدخل الفُم ينجس الانسان (SAr. 72, 19r)
lys mʾ ydẖl ʾl-fum ynǧs ʾl-ʾnsʾn
'It is not what enters the mouth that defiles a person'

(450) اليس الجبُاه هكذا يفعلوا (SAr. 72, 7v)
ʾ-lys ʾl-ǧubʾh hkḏʾ yfʿlwʾ
'Do the tax-collectors not also act this way?'

(451) فابصر هناك انسان ليس عليه كسوه العرس (SAr. 72, 27r)
f-ʾbṣr hnʾk ʾnsʾn lys ʿly-h kswh ʾl-ʿrs
'He saw a man there who did not have wedding attire on'

Thus, while obligatory person/gender/number agreement with *laysa* in nominal and verbal predications does distinguish, e.g., the poetic corpus and the Quran from the early papyri and Christian Arabic corpora, each attests a similar dichotomy between nominal and verbal predicates, on the one hand, which at least can attest inflection, and existential/sentential negation, on the other, which does not.

It is further debated whether the quasi-verbal inflection of *laysa* was original or rather was a secondary development. The etymology of *laysa* has long been debated, with opinions historically divided between those who posit a Northwest Semitic existential **yiṯ* (or **ʾiṯ*) / *lā yiṯ* (or **lā ʾiṯ*), the latter of which was loaned into Arabic from Aramaic (cf. Lipiński 2001, §47.10) and

those for whom it instead represents a retention in Arabic from a Proto-Semitic existential **ʾays / *lā ʾays* 'there is/is not' (Măcelaru 2003). More recently, Al-Jallad (2018b) has argued against a direct loan from Aramaic, proposing instead two possibilities: (1) a loan from Neo-Assyrian *laššu/laišu*, or (2) derivation (perhaps Proto-Northwest Semitic) **lā + yiṯ / ʾiṯ* and loaning into Arabic via a North Arabian language like Taymanitic, rather than directly from Aramaic. Whichever route it took, Al-Jallad convincingly argues that it was most likely a loan, and that subsequent phonological changes (e.g., reduction of di/triphthongs), coupled with the similarity in form between *laysa* and other middle-weak (II-*Y/W*) roots, led to its analysis as a member of that class (Al-Jallad 2018b, 117).

Since it is apparently a loan, the attested languages in which **lā yiṯ /ʾiṯ* occur indicate that it was originally uninflected. Further, since where secondary inflection developed, it is unlike what is attested in Arabic, it stands to reason that the original form in Arabic was invariable, and that the semi-verbal inflection of *laysa* in Arabic is a secondary development. It is less clear whether the loan occurred already in Proto-Arabic, or rather took place in a dialect/spectrum (such as, e.g., Ḥiǧāzī dialects), and then spread from there to others. The presence of uninflected reflexes of *lays*, such as *lays*, *lēs*, *las*, and *lis*, in pre-modern (e.g., Andalusi; see Corriente 2013, 126) and modern dialectal Arabic (Wilmsen 2016), combined with the evidence from the *ʿArabiyyah*, the Quran, and the early Islamic-era corpora, can be read as suggesting that *laysa* was originally borrowed as an existential or sentential negator. As its use expanded to include nominal and

verbal clauses, person/gender/number agreement was innovated, as Al-Jallad (2018b, 117) suggested, in the form of a suffix conjugation similar to that found with II-*Y/W* roots. This inflection, however, was simply a carrier for the inflection based on superficial similarities. We might speculatively suggest, if Al-Jallad's proposal of a Taymanitic (or another language in Northwest Arabia) is correct, that the loan into Arabic occurred in the Ḥiǧāz, which is why the inflection in nominal and verbal clauses is complete there. This can be visualised as follows:

	Loan		**Expansion**		**Ḥiǧāzī(?)**
Neg. Existential	$*laysa^{-inflecting}$		$laysa^{-inflecting}$		$laysa^{-inflecting}$
Nom. Clauses	—	>	$laysa^{-inflecting}$	>	$laysa^{+inflecting}$
Verb. Clauses	—		$laysa^{-inflecting}$		$laysa^{+inflecting}$

Inflecting *laysa* had clearly spread already in the pre-Islamic period, since it occurs in pre-Islamic poetry as well, e.g., in ʾImrū l-Qays's *ʾayā l-Hind*, verse seven, which reads وَلَسْتُ بِذِي رَثْيَةٍ إِمَّرٍ *wa-lastu bi-ḏī raṯyatin ʾimmarin* 'I am not one of many weaknesses'. It likely further spread in the early Islamic period, as Old Ḥiǧāzī became the prestige variety of the early ʾUmayyad state, though perhaps mainly (solely?) as a part of a literary register, and hardly, if at all, spreading into spoken varieties.

The strength of this proposal is two-fold. First, it takes seriously that *laysa* was most likely loaned into Arabic, and that the form loaned into Arabic lacked the person/gender/number inflection typical of Classical and Quranic *laysa*, which was an Arabic-internal development. Second, it takes seriously the division, attested in every corpus, including the Quran and Classical

Arabic, as well as the Middle and Modern Arabic evidence, which points to an uninflected form in existential and sentential contexts. Rather than positing a total loss of inflection, which would be unique to *laysa*, I argue here that *laysa* did not "become, as a rule, invariable" (Blau 1966–1967, 305, §204.1), but that it became variable only in certain places. The higher frequency of conjugation in Vat. Ar. 13 than in other early Christian Arabic compositions could indicate the greater prestige of Ḥiǧāzī forms, which is evident in other parts of the grammar.

Before moving on from the topic of negation, it is worth pointing out that while negating the future tense is accomplished most frequently by either *lā* or *laysa*, the negator *lan* does occur, though only four times. The negator *lan* is similarly rare in other early Gospel MSS (such that Blau 1966–1967, 301–16, §§201–14, does not mention it at all). It is not clear whether there is a semantic or pragmatic distinction between *lā* and *laysa* to negate the future on the one hand, and *lan* on the other.

2.0. Interrogatives

Numerous interrogative particles and phrases are utilised in the text of Vat. Ar. 13, all of which are well known from and attested in other corpora, pre-modern and modern. A full list of interrogatives attested is provided in Table 83 (facing page).

Table 83: Attested interrogatives and their meanings/usages

Arabic	Meaning/Usage
ما بال	'Why?'
لم	'Why?'
ما لك	'Why (What is wrong with you)?'
ما	(+nominal clause) 'What?'
ماذا	(+verbal clause) 'What?'
بماذا	'With what?'
متى / متا	'When?'
حتى متى	'Until when?'
إلى أي ساعه	'Until when?'
لعل	'Is it…perchance?'
هل	'Yes/No Question'
ا	'Yes/No Question'
ا ما	'Is it / have not…?'
ا ليس	'Is it / have not…?'
كيف	'How?'
انا	'How?'
كم	'How many?'
كم من	'How many?'

General interrogative sentences can be headed by either هل *hal* for general questions, or ا *ʾa* where the answer is 'yes/no'.

(452) وقالَ اخرون غير اوليك دعوا الان فلننظر هل ياتى ايلياس لتخليصه (48r)
w-qʾla ʾḫrwn ġyr ʾwlyk dʿwʾ ʾl-ʾn f-l-nnẓr hl yʾty ʾylyʾs l-tḫlyṣ-h
'And others, different than those, said, "Wait, let us see (if) will Elijah comes to save him"'

(453) فقالوا له ا تسمع ما يقول هاولي قال لهم ايسوع نعم (34v)
f-qʾlwʾ l-h ʾ-tsmʿ mʾ yqwl hʾwly qʾl l-hm ʾyswʿ nʿm
'Then they said to him, "Do you hear what these people are saying?" and Jesus said to them, "Yes"'

Notable is the occasional use of the shortened form لم *lima* 'why?' but the long form بماذا *bi-māḏā*, instead of بم *bima*, which is not attested.

(454) لم تدعوني صالحا (31v)
lm tdʿw-ny ṣʾlḥʾ
'Why do you call me righteous?'

(455) وان كنت انما اخرج السياطين بالابليس فاولادكم بماذا يحرجونهم (18v)
w-ʾn knt ʾnmʾ ʾḫrǧ ʾl-šyʾṭyn b-ʾl-ʾbʾlys f-ʾwlʾd-km b-mʾḏʾ yḫrǧwn-hm
'If I cast out devils by means of demons, then by what means do your sons cast them out?'

The primary means for asking 'why?' in Vat. Ar. 13 is ما بال *mā bāl* + pronoun/noun:

(456) فجعلت الكتبه والاحبار تتراطن وتقول لارداية ما بالكم تاكلون مع العشار والخطاه وتشربون (78v)
f-ǧʿlt ʾl-ktbh w-ʾl-ʾḥbʾr ttrʾṭn w-tqwl l-ʾrdʾy-h mʾ bʾl-km tʾklwn mʿ ʾl-ʿšʾr w-ʾl-ḫṭʾh w-tšrbwn
'Then the scribes and Pharisees began to talk and say to his disciples, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?"'

(457) فساله ارباوه وقالوا ما بال الكتبه يقولون ان الياسين يسغي ان ياتى اولا (28r)
f-sʾl-h ʾrbʾw-h w-qʾlwʾ mʾ bʾl ʾl-ktbh yqwlwn ʾn ʾlyʾsyn ynbġy ʾn yʾty ʾwlʾ
'And his disciples asked and said to him, "Why do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?"'

(458) وقالوا ما بال اربايك يحالفون ما عهدته الينا اسياخنا وعظماونا وامرونا به (24r–24v)

w-qʾlwʾ mʾ bʾl ʾrbʾy-k yḫʾlfwn mʾ ʿhdt-h ʾly-nʾ ʾšyʾḫ-nʾ w-ʿẓmʾw-nʾ w-ʾmrw-nʾ b-h

'And they said, "Why do you disciples break what our ancestors and elders bound us to and commanded us?"'

Although the context of the questions headed by *mā bāl* is often one of dispute with another group, or frustration with the action, this does not seem to dictate that *mā bāl* be used instead of *lima*, as can be seen from the following example where *lima* is used despite the context clearly indicating disapproval on the part of the group asking the question.

(459) فبينا هما يطلقان قال لهما قوم كانوا وقوفا ماذا يصنعان ولم تطلقان العفو (66r)

f-bynʾ hmʾ yṭlqʾn qʾl l-hmʾ qwm kʾnwʾ wqwfʾ mʾḏʾ tṣnʿʾn w-lm tṭlqʾn ʾl-ʿfw

'And while they (DU) were untying [it], a group of people who were standing nearby said to them, "What are you doing and why are you untying the donkey?"'

In one instance, the phrase ما لك *mā la-k(a)* occurs in a context where the question strongly implies disapproval and frustration.

(460) وقال يا ناقص الايمان مالك شككت (24r)

w-qʾl yʾ nʾqṣ ʾl-ʾymʾn mʾ l-k škkt

'And he said to him, "Oh, you who lack faith—why did you doubt?"'

Also frequent and notable is the usage of لعل *laʿall(a)*, typically as a subordinating conjunction meaning 'perhaps', but also, in some cases, apparently as an interrogative.

(461) لعلكم اذا قلعتم الزوان ان تقلعوا الحنطه (21r)
lʿl-km ʾḏʾ qlʿtm ʾl-zwʾn ʾn tqlʿwʾ ʾl-ḥnṭh
'Perhaps, when you pluck out the chaff, you will also pluck out the wheat'

(462) لعلهم يحزون ويستحيون من ابنى (36v)
lʿl-hm yḫzwn w-ystḥywn mn ʾbn-y
'Perhaps they will be ashamed and respect my son'

(463) قَالَ الحق {اقول} لكم انّ {واحد منكم} يسلمني فسأَهم ذلك جدًّا وَجعلُوا يقولونَ له وَاحدٌ فَواحدٌ لعلِّى انا هُوَ يا سيِّديْ (47r)
qāla ʾl-ḥq {ʾqwl} l-km ʾnn {wʾḥd mn-km} yslm-ny f-sʾ-hm ḏlk ǧddā wa-ǧʿlūʾ yqwlwna l-h wāḥdun f-wāḥdun lʿll-ī ʾnʾ huwa yʾ syyad-ī
'He said to them, "Truly {I tell} you, that {one of you} will betray me." And that troubled them greatly and they began saying to him, one at a time, "Is it I, master?"'

(464) قد شيت ان اعطي هذا الاخر كما اعطيتك او لعلي لست مسلطا ان اصطنع بمالى ما شيت (33r)
qd šyt ʾn ʾʿṭy hḏʾ ʾl-ʾḫr kmʾ ʾʿṭyt-k ʾw lʿl-y lst mslṭʾ ʾn ʾṣṭnʿ b-mʾl-y mʾ šyt
'I desire to give this last worker the same as I have given to you, or am I not able to do with my money what I want?'

3.0. Nominal Predicates

In both the Quran and the *ʿArabiyyah*, predicates of nominal sentences are often marked by the preposition *bi*, especially when headed by the verb *kān* 'he/it was', or negated by either *mā* or *laysa* (Fischer 2002, 156, §294d; Van Putten 2022, 108–9, §4.10),

e.g., لم تكن بصغيرة *lam takun bi-ṣaġīratin* ‘She was not small’. According to the grammarians, this was not associated with their Ḥiǧāzī/Naǧdī dialectal divide, except in the details of the use of *mā*. According to Al-Farrāʾ, Ḥiǧāzī dialects rarely drop the *bi* in such cases, e.g., *mā zaydun bi-qāʾimin* ‘Zaid is not standing’, but, when they do, Ḥiǧāzī dialects inflected the predicate in the accusative. Naǧdī dialects, on the other hand, inflected the predicate in the nominative case (Al-Farrāʾ, *Luġāt al-Qurʾān*, 28). The Ḥiǧāzī construction is known in the grammatical tradition as *mā al-ḥiǧāziyyah* ‘the Ḥiǧāzī *mā*’, and is typically illustrated by the Quranic ما هذا بشرا *mā hāḏā bašarā* ‘This is not a man’ (Q12.31).

In Vat. Ar. 13, nominal predicates are frequently marked by the preposition *bi-*, especially following *kān* ‘he/it was’, *laysa* ‘he/it is not’, or *ʾiḏā* ‘behold!’ Note the following examples.

(465) وقالوا ان هذا بخيال كذب (23v–24r)
w-qʾlwʾ ʾn hḏʾ b-ḫyʾl kḏb
‘And they said, “This is a false apparition”’

(466) قال له ايسوع لست بقايل لكم الي سبع مرار بل الي سبعين مره (30r)
qʾl l-h ʾyswʿ lst b-qʾyl l-km sbʿ mrʾr bl ʾly sbʿyn mrh
‘Jesus said to them, “I am not telling you seven times, but rather seventy times”’

(467) ثم قال عند ذلك لعبيده ان الوليمه المعده واوليك المادوبين لم يكونوا باهل لها (36v)
ṯm qʾl ʿnd ḏlk l-ʿbyd-h ʾn ʾl-wlymh ʾl-mʿdh w-ʾwlyk ʾl-mʾdwbyn lm ykwnwʾ b-ʾhl l-hʾ
‘Then he said to his slaves, “The feast [is] ready but those guests were not deserving of it”’

(468) وادا يصوت ينادى من المزنه (61r)
w-ʾdʾ y[b]-ṣwt ynʾdy mn ʾl-mznh
'And behold, there was a voice from the cloud'

Unmarked nominal predicates following, e.g., *laysa* and *kān* also occur, though, as in the Quran, these instances are less numerous than those with *bi*.

(469) ولستم انتم المتكلمين بل روح القدس ينطق علي السنتكم (69v)
w-lstm ʾntm ʾl-mtklmyn bl rwḥ ʾl-qds ynṭq ʿly ʾlsnt-km
'You are not speaking but rather the Holy Spirit speaks upon your tongues'

No instances of *mā* negating a nominal predicate in the accusative (*mā al-ḥiǧāziyyah*) are attested in the Gospels of Vat. Ar. 13.

4.0. Temporal Adverb Clauses

Temporal adverbs in Vat. Ar. 13 can occur syndetically, as a noun of time at the head of the adverbial clause. This is especially common with the nouns *sāʿah* 'hour, moment' and *ḥīn* 'time'.

(470) فلما ان اصبطع ايسوع وساعه صعد من الما انفتحت له السما (3r)
f-lmʾ ʾn ʾṣṭbġ ʾyswʿ w-sʾʿh ṣʿd mn ʾl-mʾ ʾnftḥt l-h ʾl-smʾ
'Then when Jesus had been baptised, as he came out of the water, the heavens opened up to him'

(471) فساعه خرج منه الشيطَان تكلم ذلك الاخرس (13v)
f-sʾʿh ḫrǧ mn-h ʾl-šyṭān tklm ḏlk ʾl-ʾḫrs
'And as soon as it [the demon] left him, that mute man spoke'

(472) حين يسمعه فقبله من ساعته بفرح وسرور (20v)
ḥyn ysmʿ-h f-yqbl-h mn sʾʿt-h b-frḥ w-srwr
'When he hears him then he accepts him immediately with joy and happiness'

Adverbs also occur asyndetically, most frequently consisting of a noun of time followed by the noun *ʾiḏ* ‘then, at that time’, but can also include other compound phrases, such as عند ذلك *ʿinda ḏālik* ‘then, at that time’, as well as prepositional phrases, especially *fī ḏālika al-zamān* ‘at that time’. Nouns in such constructions can also be followed by *mā*. This is especially common following *ʾiḏā*.

(473) حسد افرجوا وابهجوا لان ثوابكم جزيل في السما (4r)
ḥynyḏ ʾfrḥwʾ w-ʾbhğwʾ l-ʾn ṯwʾb-km ğzyl fy ʾl-smʾ
‘Then rejoice and be glad, because your reward is great in heaven’

(474) فالح علي تلاميذه ساعتيد ان يركبوا السفينه (23v)
f-ʾlḥ ʿly tlʾmyḏ-h sʾʿtyḏ ʾn yrkbwʾ ʾl-sfynh
‘Then Jesus directed his disciples to get into the boat’

(475) عند ذلك انطلق روح القدس بيسوع الي القفر ليمتحنه المحال (3r)
ʿnd ḏlk ʾnṭlq rwḥ ʾl-qds b-yswʿ ʾly ʾl-qfr l-ymtḥn-h ʾl-mḥʾl
‘Then the Holy Spirit took Jesus out into the desert so that the devil could test him’

(476) في ذلك الرمان كان يسوع يتمشا بين الزروع (17r)
fy ḏlk ʾl-zmʾn kʾn yswʿ ytmšʾ byn ʾl-zrwʿ
‘At that time, Jesus was walking in the fields’

(477) فاذا ما وجدتموه (1v)
f-ʾḏʾ mʾ wğdtmw-h
‘Then whenever you find him...’

Another kind of compound temporal adverbial phrase that stands asyndetically at the head of the clause is the combination of a noun of time + 3rd person pronoun suffix, meaning ‘immediately, at that moment’. In these cases, the pronoun suffix modifies a referent in the narrative and therefore inflects for person

and number. The most common phrase is *min sāʿah* + pronoun, but others occur as well.

(478) فكلمهم ايسوع من ساعته وقال تقووا ولا تخافوا لاني انا هو (24r)
f-klm-hm ʾysw‘ mn sʾʿt-h w-qʾl tqwwʾ w-lʾ tḫwfwʾ l-ʾn-y ʾnʾ hw
‘Then Jesus immediately talked to them and said, “Take heart and do not fear, for it is I”’

(479) فلما انتبه يوسف من نومه صنع كما امره ملك الرب وانطلق ليلته (1v)
f-lmʾ ʾntbh ywsf mn nwm-h ṣn‘ kmʾ ʾmr-h mlk ʾl-rb w-ʾnṭlq lylt-h
‘And when Joseph woke from his sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord had ordered him, and he set out immediately’

(480) فاقلعت عنهَا الحمَّي من سَاعتهَا (10v)
f-ʾql‘t ʿn-hā ʾl-ḥmmā mn sāʿt-hā
‘Then the fever left her immediately’

(481) فانفتحَت اعينْهمَا من سَاعتهمَا (13v)
f-ʾnftḥat ʾʿyn-hmā mn sāʿt-hmā
‘Then their eyes were opened immediately’

(482) ومن ساعتهم تركوا السفينه (3v)
w-mn sʾʿt-hm trkwʾ ʾl-sfynh
‘And they immediately got out of the boat’

Such a construction, with a 3rd person pronoun suffix that inflects for gender/number, occurs only marginally in, e.g., the Quran and Classical Arabic (Blau 1979):

(483) المُشْرِكُونَ نَجَسٌ فَلَا يَقْرَبُ المَسْجِدَ الحَرَامَ بَعْدَ عَامِهِم هَذَا (Q9.28)
al-mušrikūna nağasun fa-lā yaqrabu l-masğida l-ḥarāma baʿda ʿāmi-him hāḏā
‘The idolaters are unclean, therefore they should not approach the holy mosque after this year’

(484) سارا ليلتهما ويومهما (Blau 1979, 35)
sārā laylata-humā wa-yawma-humā
'The two of them walked day and night'

The same construction, especially *min sāʿah* + 3rd person pronoun is, on the other hand, frequent in some early Christian Arabic MSS.

(485) نظر الي اخوين اخرين في سفينه مع زبدى ابيهما يصلحان شباكهما فدعاهما ومن ساعتهما تركا السفينه واباهما ولحقاه (SAr. 70, 6r)
nẓr ʾly ʾḫwyn ʾḫryn fy sfynh mʿ zbdy ʾby-hmʾ yṣlḥʾn šbʾk-hmʾ f-dʿʾ-hmʾ w-mn sʾʿt-hmʾ trkʾ ʾl-sfynh w-ʾbʾ-hmʾ w-lḥqʾ-h
'And he saw two other brothers in a boat with Zebedee, their father, repairing their nets, and he called them and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him'

(486) ومكانه الذي اخذ الخمسه قناطير ذهب من ساعته فعمل بها وربح اخر خمسه قناطير (SAr. 74, 55v)
w-mkʾn-h ʾlḏy ʾḫḏ ʾl-ḫmsh qnʾṭyr ḏhb mn sʾʿt-h f-ʿml b-hʾ rbḥ ʾḫr ḫmsh qnʾṭyr
'And there, the one who had taken the five talents went immediately and worked and gained five other talents'

A reflex in the modern dialects is common, though as far as I know in each dialect the pronoun suffix is typically 3FSG, regardless of the gender of the referent, such as Damascene *waʾta* 'at that time' (Lentin 2006, 549, §2.2.2) < **waqta-hā*, and Egyptian *saʿítha* < **sāʿata-hā* and *waʾtáha* < **waqta-hā*, iidem', and *yawmət-ā* 'that day' (Brustad et al 2008, 484).[2] The use of 3rd

[2] The *-t* element in *yawmətā* is likely related to the **-at* suffix, perhaps in its function as an individuator/specifier (Brustad et al 2024, 484).

person pronoun suffixes in this phrase is common across the Semitic languages, though with the exception of the Ethio-Semitic languages, where it grammaticalised further into a definite article, the suffix was typically 3MSG, regardless of context (Huehnergard and Pat-El 2012). Huehnergard and Pat-El argue convincingly that, rather than functioning as a pronoun, this usage reflects an originally anaphoric demonstrative one (so, e.g., *yawma-hū* '*that* day' rather than '*his/its* day'), a function of pronouns retained in all Semitic languages with the exception of Arabic (2012, 37–40, §4). Fully inflecting 3rd person pronoun suffixes in Arabic therefore represent an innovative reanalysis, fuelled perhaps by the unique lack of the anaphoric use of the 3rd person pronouns in Arabic.

Further parallels with modern dialectal usages of *sāʿah* include the use of both DEF-*sāʿah* and DEM + DEF-*sāʿah* constructions.

(487) وقال ان ابنتي توفيت الساعه وانا اطلب اليك بان {ت}اتي فتضع يدك عليها (12v)
w-qʾl ʾn ʾbnt-y twfyt ʾl-sʾʿh w-ʾnʾ ʾṭlb ʾly-k b-ʾn {t}ʾty f-tḍʿ yd-k ʿly-hʾ
'And he said, "My daughter just died and I am asking you to come and put your hand on her"'

(488) فقالت له اريد في هذه الساعه ان تدفع الي راس يوحنن (84r)
f-qʾlt l-h ʾryd fy hḏh ʾl-sʾʿh ʾn tdfʿ ʾly rʾs ywḥnn
'And she said to him, "I want you now to deliver me the head of John"'

In many modern dialects, reflexes of **hā(ḏi) al-sāʿah*, and perhaps also **al-sāʿah*, meaning 'now' occur, including Baghdadi *hassa*,

Khartoum *hassi / hassaˁ*, Jordanian *hassaˁ*, and Palestinian *issa(ˁ) / essa(ˁ)* (see, e.g., Watson 2006, 23–24, §2.2; Brustad et al 2024, pp. 481–82, §9.1.2.4). The fact that both examples occur in direct speech could reflect another instance of colloquial-esque language being used intentionally, though of course words for 'now' are perhaps likeliest to come up in direct speech rather than narrative.

5.0. Numerals

The morphosyntax of numbers in Arabic is famously complex. Several aspects of the (morpho)syntax of numbers in Vat. Ar. 13 attest variation that merits discussion here. These include variation in the (in)famous feature of gender polarity in the numbers 3–10, wherein numbers modifying masculine nouns are marked with *-ah / -at*, but nouns that are feminine do not, as well as the variation in the position/distribution of the definite article in number phrases. This is mostly observed in Vat. Ar. 13; however, when the number three occurs, the form **ṯalāṯah* is used regardless of the gender of the counted noun.

(489) ثم خرج في بله ساعات من النهار... ثم خرج في ست وفي تسع ساعات (32v)
ṯm ḫrǧ fy ṯlṯh sˀˁt mn ˀl-nhˀr… ṯm ḫrǧ fy st w-fy tsˁ sˀˁt
'Then he went out at hour three (i.e., 9am)... then he went out at hour six (i.e., noon) and at hour nine (i.e., 3pm)'

(490) عند ذلك سبه ملكوت السما عشر ابكار... فخمس منهن عاقلات... وخمس جاهلات (43v)

ʿnd ḏlk tšbh mlkwt ʾl-smʾ ʿšr ʾbkʾr… f-ḫms mn-hn kn ʿʾqlʾt… w-ḫms ǧʾhlʾt

'Then the kingdom of heaven resembles ten virgins… five of whom were wise… and five foolish"

(491) اما تذكرون اذا طعمت من خمسه ارغف خمسه الف انسان (59v)

ʾ-mʾ tḏkrwn ʾḏʾ ṭʿmt mn ḫmsh ʾrġf ḫmsh ʾlf ʾnsʾn

'Do you not remember when I fed five thousand people from five loaves'

Another feature characterised by variation in Vat. Ar. 13 is definiteness marking of number phrases. Fischer (2002, 81, §129b, n. 4) reports that the definite article can be prefixed to only the number, only the counted noun, or both. Each of these three strategies is attested at least once in the MS.

(492) فانطلق ذلك الدى اعطى الخمسه قناطير (44v)

f-ʾnṭlq ḏlk ʾldy ʾʿṭy ʾl-ḫmsh qnʾṭyr

'Then the one whom he gave five talents left'

(493) فدنا صاحب الخمسه القناطير (44v)

f-dnʾ ṣʾḥb ʾl-ḫmsh ʾl-qnʾṭyr

'Then the one with five talents approached'

(494) ولحقه جمع كبير من الجليل ومن عشر المداين (4r)

w-lḥq-h ǧmʿ kbyr mn ʾl-ǧlyl w-mn ʿšr ʾl-mdʾyn

"Then a large crowd from Galilee and the Decapolis followed him"

Finally, the kind of plural morphology used following numbers varies across Vat. Ar. 13. In most cases, a paucal plural form, where one exists, is attested. This, I suggest, includes forms of 'thousands' that are spelled الف at various places.

(495) وكان القوم الدين اكلوا من دلك الحنز نحو من اربعه الف انسان (59r)
w-kʾn ʾl-qwm ʾldyn ʾklwʾ mn dlk ʾl-ḫbz nḥw mn ʾrbh ʾlf ʾnsʾn
‘And the crowd that ate from that bread was around four thousand men’

(496) عدد القوم الذين اكلوا من ذلك الخبز خمسه الف رجل (85r)
ʿdd ʾl-qwm ʾlḏyn ʾklwʾ mn ḏlk ʾl-ḫbz ḫmsh ʾlf rǧl
‘The number of the crowd that ate from that bread was five thousand men’

The spelling could reflect the singular, perhaps based on contamination with *miʾah* ‘a hundred’, which is ubiquitously singular after the numbers 3–10. However, Lane (1863, §80.2) mentions *ʾāluf*, though, according to him, it occurs only after the number ‘three’. This was likely a matter of variation historically, and that the paucal plural, rather than the singular, is intended here is suggested by the fact that numbers from 3–10 trigger paucal plural forms elsewhere. This includes the paucal form ارغف after the numeral خمسه ‘five’, presumably *ʾarġuf* (or *ʾarġif*), which is not mentioned in Lane (1863, §1113.2), who instead lists *ʾarġifah*. Recall the example, cited above, in which both الف and ارغف occur after خمسه ‘five’.

(497) اما تذكرون اذا طعمت من خمسه ارغف خمسه الف انسان (59v)
ʾ-mʾ tḏkrwn ʾḏʾ ṭʿmt mn ḫmsh ʾrġf ḫmsh ʾlf ʾnsʾn
‘Do you not remember when I fed five thousand people from five loaves’

In another place (23v), however, the same numeral is followed by رغف, presumably the plural *ruġ(u)f*, which Lane (ibid.) lists as a plural of multitude. A further example involves the interpretation of the word قرص ‘loaf of bread’, which Lane (1863,

§2514.2) spells *qurs(ah)* and lists as a synonym of *ḫubz(ah)*. The spelling in Vat. Ar. 13 could reflect *quraṣ*, which Lane (ibid.) mentions as a plural of *qurṣah*; this plural form is supported by the form of the numeral seven, سبع, exhibiting gender polarity in that case. However, elsewhere قرص occurs after *kam*, which usually triggers the singular form, and in the same verse قرص is modified by both سبع and سبعه:

(498) قال لهم ايسوع كم قرص عندكم من الخبر قالوا له سبع قرص وشى من سمك صغار...فتناول تلك السبعه قرص (26r)

qʾl l-hm ʾysw‘ km qrṣ ‘nd-km mn ʾl-ḫbz qʾlwʾ l-h sb‘ w-šy mn smk ṣġʾr… f-tnʾwl tlk ʾl-sb‘h qrṣ

‘Jesus said to them, “How many loaves of bread do you have with you?” They said to him, “Seven, and a few small fish”... Then he took those seven loaves...’

This kind of agreement variation between the same number and counted noun is attested in other early Christian MSS as well. Compare the following examples:

(499) فتقدم الذي اخذ الخمس وزنات فقرب له خمس وزنات اخر... هذه خمسه وزنات اخر ربحت عليها (Ar. 74, 55v)

f-tqdm ʾlḏy ʾḫḏ ʾl-ḫms wznʾt f-qrb l-h ḫms wznʾt ʾḫr… hḏh ḫmsh wznʾt ʾḫr rbḥt ‘ly-hʾ

‘Then the one who received the five talents came and presented him five other talents… Here are five other talents I earned on them [the five original talents]’

(500) اما تفهموا ولا تدكرُوا الخمس خبزات لخمسه الاف... ولا السبعه خبزات لاربعه الاف (Vat. Borg. Ar. 95, 29r)

ʾ-mʾ tfhmwʾ w-lʾ tdkrūʾ ʾl-ḫms ḫbzʾt l-ḫmsh ʾlʾf… w-lʾ ʾl-sb‘h ḫbzʾt l-ʾrb‘h ʾlʾf

'Do you not understand nor remember the five loaves for the five thousand [...] or the seven loaves for the four thousand?'

(501) حسد يشبه ملك السما عسره عداری... وخمس منهن كن حكيمات الجاهلات اخذن سرُجهن ولم ياخذن معهن زيتا {والخمسه} (SAr. 70, 30r)

ḥynyḏ yšbh mlk ʾl-smʾ ʿšrh ʿdʾry... w-ḫms mn-hn kn ḥkymʾt {w-ʾl-ḫmsh}[3] *ǧʾhlʾt ʾḫḏn surǧ-hn w-lm yʾḫḏn mʿ-hn zytʾ*

'Then the kingdom of heaven resembles ten virgins... and five of them were wise, but the five foolish virgins took their lamps but did not take any oil with them'

(502) حينيذ تشبه ملكوت السما عشر عذاری... خمسه منهن كن حليمات وخمسه سفها (SAr. 75, 57v)

ḥynyḏ tšbh mlkwt ʾl-smʾ ʿšr ʿḏʾry... ḫmsh mn-hn kn ḥlymʾt w-ḫmsh sfhʾ

'Then the kingdom of heaven resembles ten virgins... five of them were wise and five foolish'

Blau (1966–1967, 366–70, §247) lists a number of contexts that he adduces which increase the likelihood of invariable numeral forms marked with *-ah*, especially when they follow the head noun, but he also supposes that the general trend was towards the generalisation of *-ah* forms. Whether this is the case, however, is less certain. In SAr. 74, the difference is apparently between narrative and direct speech, which, as we have seen in

[3] The scribe forgot to write the word and went back and wrote it above الجاهلات. This could be why it is definite, whereas the first mention of the wise five virgins is not, as well perhaps as why it attests the *-ah* whereas the first does not.

Vat. Ar. 13 (and elsewhere), seems to have been a factor in determining the linguistic forms used. The example from SAr. 70 could reflect a pattern wherein the singular form of the noun lacking *-ah*, regardless of the gender of the noun referent—and the agreement it triggers with other targets—determined the form of the numeral. In SAr. 75, the numerals with *-ah* occur in a distributive sense, following the head noun 'five of them… and five of them'. Such a context would likely trigger the use of the *-ah* numeral in virtually all Arabic corpora (Fischer 2002, 81, §129b, n. 5). In any case, the morphosyntax of numerals in the Christian Arabic corpus remains underexplored and deserves a fresh and detailed treatment. Such a treatment, however, remains outside of the scope of this chapter.

6.0. Participles

Participles in Vat. Ar. 13 function as adjectives, substantives, and, when the predicate of a nominal clause, with verbal semantics as well. The vast majority of instances of the participle in the Gospel portions of Vat. Ar. 13 function either as adjectives or substantives. The syntax of participles functioning as adjectives is unremarkable, so I will comment here only on instances in which the participle functions either as a substantive with verbal semantics or as a verbal predicate.

Quite commonly, the participles functioning substantively with verbal semantics occur as the first term in a construct with a noun that is semantically the object of the verb the participle expresses. The objects are marked definite either by means of the article or a pronoun suffix. The tense value for those participles

in construct can be either present/future or past, whereas the 'improper annexation' typically communicates a past tense (or perhaps perfective aspect) (Sībawayh, *Al-Kitāb*, 164–81; Van Putten 2024, 307–10).

(503) وقال يا ناقص الايمان (24r)
w-qʾl yʾ nʾqṣ ʾl-ʾymʾn
'And he said, "Oh, you who lack faith (lit. 'lacker of faith')"'

(504) وكل عاملى الاثم (21v)
w-kl ʿmly ʾl-ʾṯm
'And all the evildoers (lit. 'doers of evil')'

(505) الحاملى الاعدال القيله (17r)
ʾl-ḥʾmly ʾ-ʾʿdʾl ʾl-ṯqylh[4]
'Those who have born heavy burdens'

In addition to the construct, such substantivised participles can be followed by an object in the accusative. Places where this occurs unambiguously are rare, and the participle in these constructions in Vat. Ar. 13 is definite, but the object is indefinite:

(506) تمثلوا وشبهوا بالسحره الحبيثه المثمره ثمارا سيه (18v)
tmṯlwʾ w-tšbhwʾ b-ʾl-šǧrh ʾl-ḫbyṯh ʾl-mṯmrh ṯmʾrʾ syyh
'They were like the bad tree which has born bad fruit'

Elsewhere, definite objects of the verb are marked by the preposition *li*.

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[4] Note the parallel construction in the Quran, which reads المُقِيمِي الصَّلَاةِ 'the ones who establish prayer' (Q22.35).

(507) والقاهرون للسهوات (16r)
ʾl-qʾhrwn l-l-šhwʾt
'Those who conquer the passions'

(508) فقالوا هذا رجل اكل شارب للخمور (16v)
f-qʾlwʾ hḏʾ rğl ʾkl šʾrb l-l-ḫmwr
'And they said, "This man is a glutton and drinker of wine"'

Such a usage of *li* is more common with participles, but occurs with both participles and finite verbs more commonly when the object precedes the verb: *mā kunnā li-l-ġaybi ḥāfiẓīna* 'we did not protect the secret' (Reckendorf 1921, 249). It is well attested in the Quran as well, e.g., أَفْتُونِي فِي رُؤْيَايَ إِنْ كُنْتُم لِلرُّؤْيَا تَعْبُرُونَ *ʾaftū-nī fī ruʾyā-ya ʾin kuntum li-r-ruʾyā taʿburūna* 'explain to me my vision, if you can interpret the vision'.

Another especially common usage of the substantive participles occurs with the root *qwl*, where quotations of prophetic speech from the prophetic biblical texts are reported in a way that parallels the use of the suffix conjugation, with which it is occasionally paired in the narrative, and thus can be interpreted as reflecting a past or present perfect meaning.

(509) ليكمل ما قال الله على لسان السي القايل افتح فمي بالامثال (21v)
l-ykml mʾ qʾl ʾllh ʿly lsʾn ʾl-nby ʾl-qʾyl ʾftḥ fm-y b-ʾl-ʾmṯʾl
'In order to fulfil what God said (suffix conj.) on the tongue of the prophet who said (participle), "I open my mouth with parables"'

(510) ليكمل ما قِيل علي لسَان شعيَا النبي القايل انه يحتمل اوجَاعَنا (10v)
l-ykml mʾ qīl ʾly lsān šʿyā ʾl-nby ʾl-qʾyl ʾn-h yḥtml ʾwǧāʿ-nā

> ‘In order to fulfil what was said (suffix conj.) on the tongue of Isaiah the prophet, who said (participle) “He bears our pains”’

In another place, Jesus responds to a question about whether he is indeed the son of God, to which he responds that it is the one questioning him, rather than he, who has claimed that.

(511) انت القايل ذلك (52v)
ʾnt ʾl-qʾyl ḏlk
‘You are the one who has said (claimed) that’

This once again matches the description of the grammarians, who note that, a nominalised past tense meaning of the participle is possible as long as it takes the definite article, thereby making it equivalent to *allaḏī faʿala* ‘the one who has done’ (*Al-Kitāb* I:182–84; Van Putten 2024, 308).

Participles can also function as verbal predicates in Vat. Ar. 13, expressing either present or future tense. In most cases, the participle in predicative position is indefinite.

(512) انا عارف بك من انت (76v)
ʾnʾ ʿʾrf b-k mn ʾnt
‘I know who you are’

(513) وقال له انى طالب اليك يا سيدى (77v)
w-qʾl l-h ʾn-y ṭʾlb ʾly-k yʾ syd-y
‘And he said to him, “I am asking you, master”’

(514) هاناذا مرسل ملاكى امامك ليسهل السبل بين يديك (16r)
hʾnʾḏʾ mrsl mlʾk-y ʾmʾm-k l-yshl ʾl-sbl byn ydy-k
‘Behold, I am sending my messenger before you to make the paths easy for you’

(515) وانا دافعه الى من احببت (75r)
w-ʾnʾ dʾfʿ-h ʾly mn ʾḥbbt
‘And I will give it to whomever I want’

(516) وقال له انا معطيك هذا كله ان خررت لي ساجدا (3r)
w-qʾl l-h ʾnʾ mʿṭy-k hḏʾ kl-h ʾn ḫrrt ly sʾǧdʾ
‘And he said to him, “I will give you all of this if you bow before me”’

(517) الفصح كاين بعد يومين وابن البشر سيسلم ليصلب (46r)
ʾl-fṣḥ kʾyn bʿd ywmyn w-ʾbn ʾl-bšr s-yslm l-yṣlb
‘Passover is in two days and the son of man will be handed over to be crucified’

Participles functioning as verbal predicates ubiquitously express a present/future tense meaning, which again fits the Quranic evidence, as well as the description of the grammarians, who assert that for a past tense meaning the definite article, or the construct, is required (Al-Zamaḫšarī, *Al-Mufaṣṣal*, 100, *apud* Van Putten 2024, 309). No examples of the participle in Vat. Ar. 13 unambiguously attest an indefinite verbal predicate with past tense or perfect aspect, as in most modern dialects (Brustad et al. 2024, 315–20, §5.2.4).

7.0. Direct Objects

Direct objects in Vat. Ar. 13 are in general marked in ways that are, from a comparative perspective, unremarkable. A few instances are marked, however, and deserve some brief remarks here. For example, verbs of motion in Vat. Ar. 13 typically take

a direct object, especially the verb *ʾatā* ‘he came’, although indirect objects also occur.

(518) ثمّ اتي تلاميذه فوجدهم رقوُدًا (53r)
ṯmm ʾty tlʾmyḏ-h f-wǧd-hm rqūdan
‘Then he came to his disciples and found them sleeping’

(519) قد اتاه محافل كثيره (58v)
qd ʾtʾ-h mḥʾfl kṯyrh
‘Many crowds came to him’

In a few places, a verb of motion takes two objects, and in those cases the first is a direct object while the second is marked with a prepositional phrase.

(520) فانا بحر الجليل الى تخوم العشر المداين (58r)
f-ʾtʾ bhr ʾl-ǧlyl ʾly tḫwm ʾl-ʿšr ʾl-mdʾyn
‘Then he came to the sea of Galilee, to the region of the Decapolis’

We have already seen with participles that the direct object of fientive verbs can be introduced by *li*, and in a few places this occurs with finite verbs as well, primarily when the object precedes the verb.

(521) لهولاي الاثنى عشر ارسل يسوع (14r)
*l-hwlʾy ʾl-ʾṯny ʿšr ʾrsl ysw*ʿ
‘These twelve Jesus sent out’

This is the same pattern reported for and attested in the *ʿArabiyyah* and subsequent Classical Arabic tradition, where an object that precedes the verb is obligatorily marked by *li* (Fischer 2002, 113, §203).

Lastly, in two places, the usage of the pronominal object marker *ʾiyyā* is worth noting. In the first example, in Matt. 26.15,

the second, indirect object of the verb *sallam* ‘he betrayed, handed over’, occurs as a pronoun suffixed to *ʾiyyā* instead of the expect object of a preposition (*li* or *ʾilā*).

(522) فقال لهم ما الذى يسركم ان تجعلوه لي وانا اسلمه اياكم (46v)
f-qʾl l-hm mʾ ʾlḏy ysr-km ʾn tǧʿlw-h l-y w-ʾnʾ ʾslm-h ʾyʾ-km
‘And he said to them, “What would you be willing to give me if I hand him over to you?”’

Here, the Syriac *Vorlage* introduces the indirect object as expected with the preposition *lə*, and while a Greek calque cannot be ruled out, it should be noted that, in the Greek, the indirect object *hūmīn* ‘to you (PL)’ precedes the direct object *auton* ‘him (ACC)’, the opposite of the Arabic text.

A third example of *ʾiyyā* usage that is interesting from the point of view of the grammatical tradition is its use to mark a predicate in a basic nominal clause.

(523) وقَالَ الذي اقبلهُ هُوَ اياه (53v)
w-qāla ʾlḏy ʾqbl-hu huwa ʾyʾ-h
‘And he said, “The one whom I kiss is him (lit. ‘he is him’)”’

This usage parallels the famous debate referred to in Arabic as *al-masʾalah al-zunbūriyyah* ‘the hornet question’, which involved a grammatical debate between the Baṣran grammarian Sībawayh and the Kūfan grammarian and Quranic reader Al-Kisāʾī over the correct construction of the final clause of the sentence: *kuntu ʾaẓunnu ʾanna l-ʿaqraba ʾašaddu lasʿatan mina z-zunbūri fa-ʾiḏā huwa hiya / ʾiyyā-hā* ‘I always thought that the scorpion had a more painful sting than the hornet, and it is true’. The question

centred on whether the final clause should be rendered with subject pronouns (*fa-ʾiḏā huwa hiya*), which was Sībawayh's preference, or with an object pronoun in second position (*fa-ʾiḏā huwa ʾiyyā-hā*), as Al-Kisāʾī contended (Versteegh 2014, 72). Despite Sībawayh's eventual position as the master of Arabic grammar, Al-Kisāʾī won the debate, both in terms of the incident (decided surreptitiously by planted Bedouin informants in the crowd), as well as the popularity of the construction.

Before moving on, mention should be made of several examples of the fronting of the object suffixed to *ʾiyyā*, which parallels various Quranic usages:

(524) واذا صوت ينادى من السحاب ويقول هذا اسى الحبيب الذى به سررت اياه فاطيعوا (28r)

w-ʾḏʾ ṣwt ynʾdy mn ʾl-sḥʾb w-yqwl hḏʾ ʾbn-y ʾl-ḥbyb ʾlḏy b-h srrt ʾyʾ-h f-ʾṭyʿwʾ

'And then there was a voice from the cloud calling and saying, "This is my beloved son in whom I am pleased; obey him!"'

In this passage (Matt. 17.5), the fronted pronoun likely also serves to highlight the distinctiveness of Jesus over against both Moses (representing the Torah/Law) and Elijah (representing the prophets): it is to him that you will listen primarily, more than any of the others.[5]

Another example of a fronted pronoun suffixed to the particle *ʾiyyā* is.

[5] I am indebted to an anonymous reviewer of the book for this point.

(525) واياكم اعني ولكم اقول ايها السامعون احبوا اعداكم (81r)
w-ʾyʾ-km ʾʿny w-l-km ʾqwl ʾyhʾ ʾl-sʾmʿwn ʾḥbwʾ ʾʿdʾ-km
'And you I address and to you I say, "Love your enemies"'

This is of course reminiscent of various Quranic passages, most famously إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ *ʾiyyā-ka naʿbudu wa-ʾiyyā-ka nastaʿīnu* 'It is you alone whom we worship and you alone whom we ask for help' (Q1.5). It seems likely that this stylistic variant was incorporated in Vat. Ar. 13 to parallel and intentionally mimic Quranic style.

8.0. The Energic

The energic verbal form, which is equivalent to the subjunctive + suffixed *-n(na)*, is typically used either to establish certainty from the perspective of the speaker, and thus frequently with oaths. In positive contexts, it is ubiquitously preceded by *la*, as in the Quran. Here, it is mostly used in oaths, but at least once occurs in a future context that clearly indicates speaker certainty that the act will occur. The energic occurs also in a negated construction, preceded by *lā*, functioning as a kind of intensive negative imperative. Examples of both include the following.

8.1. Positive

(526) الحق اقول لكم لتزولن السماوات والارض قبل ان تزول يا واحده او خط واحد من التوراه والانبيا (4v)
ʾl-ḥq ʾqwl l-km l-tzwln ʾl-smʾwʾt w-ʾl-ʾrḍ qbl ʾn tzwl yʾ wʾḥdh ʾḫṭ wʾḥd mn ʾl-twrʾh w-ʾl-ʾnbyʾ

'Truly I tell you, the heavens and the earth will surely pass away before one jot or tittle passes away from the Torah and the Prophets'

(527) الحق اقول لكم ليفرحن به اشد من فرحه بالتسعه والسعين الى لم تضلل (30r)
ʾl-ḥq ʾqwl l-km l-yfrḥn b-h ʾšd mn frḥ-h b-ʾl-tsʿh w-ʾl-tsʿyn ʾlty lm tḍll
'Truly I tell you that he will surely rejoice more in it [the recovered sheep] than in the 99 that did not go astray'

(528) الكاس التى اعطانيها ابي لاشربنّهَا (52r)
ʾl-kʾs ʾlty ʾʿṭʾ-ny-hʾ ʾb-y l-ʾšrbnn-hā
'The cup that my father has given me, I will surely drink it'

8.2. Negated

(529) لا تعطنّ قدسكم للكلابِ ولا تلقنّ مرجانكم وجوهركم امام الخنازير (8r)
lʾ tʿṭnn qds-km l-l-klʾbi w-lʾ tlqnn mrǧʾn-km w-ǧwhr-km ʾmʾm ʾl-ḫnʾzyr
'Do not cast your holy thing to the dogs, nor your jewels before the pigs'

The energic is apparently not frequent in other early Christian Arabic MSS, but Blau does document its occurrence relative to the spelling phenomenon wherein the **la* is spelled *plene* (mostly) before the 1CSG form of the energic, i.e., لا اعدلن 'I shall turn' (1966–1967, 70, §8.2). Most of the forms Blau mentions express a certain future.

9.0. Verbal Form Variation

In a few places in Vat. Ar. 13, verbal forms from the same root vary with no apparent distinction in meaning. This is especially common with form II and form III/VI verbs of the roots *brk* ‘bless’, and *bšr* ‘proclaim the gospel’. Note the following examples.

9.1. *bšr*

(530) انتقل من هنالك ليبشر ويعلم في مداينهم (83r)
ʾntql mn hnʾlk l-ybšr w-yʿlm fy mdʾyn-hm
‘He went out from there to proclaim the gospel and to teach in their cities’

(531) والاموات سعون والمساكين يتباشرون (85v)
w-ʾl-ʾmwʾt ynbʿṯwn w-ʾl-msʾkyn ytbʾšrwn
‘...and the dead are resurrected and the outcast are proclaimed the gospel’

9.2. *brk*

(532) فتناول السبعه الارغف فبرك عليها ثم كسرها (58v)
f-tnʾwl ʾl-sbʿh ʾl-ʾrġf f-brk ʿly-hʾ ṯm ksr-hʾ
‘Then he took the seven loaves and blessed them and then broke them’

(533) هلموا يايها المبركون الذين بركهم ابي (45r)
hlmwʾ yʾyhʾ ʾl-mbrkwn ʾlḏyn brk-hm ʾb-y
‘Come, you blessed ones, whom my father blessed’

(534) فاحتملهم على ذراعه ثم وضع يده على رووسهم وبارك عليهم (64r)
f-ʾḥtml-hm ʿly ḏrʾʿ-h ṯm wḍʿ yd-h ʿly rwws-hm w-bʾrk ʿly-hm
‘Then he carried them in his arms and put his hand on their heads and blessed them’

(535) مبارك الاتى باسم الرب (41r)
mbʾrk ʾl-ʾty b-ʾsm ʾl-rb
'Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord'

Such form variation is common across Arabic corpora, pre-modern and modern, including, it should be emphasised, the *ʿArabiyyah* as described and documented by the early grammarians. In his *Luġāt al-Qurʾān*, Al-Farrāʾ mentions many examples of verb form alternations, usually, according to him, distributed dialectally. Note the following examples of his (page numbers all from *Luġāt al-Qurʾān*).

- Ḥiǧāzī form III *yurāʾūna* 'they act hypocritically' versus Qays/Tamīm/ʾAsad form II *yuraʾʾūna* 'idem.' (37)
- Ḥiǧāzī form II *yubaššir* 'he gives good news' versus 'some Arabs' using form I *yabšur* 'idem.' (48)

Incidentally, whenever the grammarians mention such variation for a word or root that Vat. Ar. 13 uses, the attested form conforms to Ḥiǧāzī usage.

10.0. Pluractionality

Pluractionality refers to a morpho-syntactic property of the verb that serves to distinguish either a plurality of events, as opposed to a singular one, or as here, to a plurality of participants (Newman 1980; Mattiola 2017; 2020). In Vat. Ar. 13, a few instances suggest that verbal forms II and V could have been associated

with a plurality of objects (form II) and subjects (form V). Typically, the passive of form I is either internal or form VII when the subject is either singular or a paucal plural.

(536) وساعه صعد من الما انفتحت له السما (3r)
w-sʾʿh ṣʿd mn ʾl-mʾ ʾnftḥt l-h ʾl-smʾ
'And when he came up out of the water, the heavens were opened up to him'

(537) فانفتحت اعينهما من ساعتهما (13v)
f-ʾnftḥt ʾʿyn-hmʾ mn sʾʿt-hmʾ
'And their eyes were opened immediately'

(538) فانشقّ حجاب الهيكل ساعتئذٍ باثنين من اعلاه الي اسْفلهِ (48r)
f-ʾnšqq ḥǧʾb ʾl-hykl sʾʿtyḏin b-ʾṯnyn mn ʾʿlʾ-h ʾly ʾsfl-hi
'Then the veil of the temple was rent in two, from top to bottom'

However, in one place, form V is used instead of form VII. The only difference between contexts in which form VII and form V were used is that the latter occur only with plural subjects.

(539) وتشققت الحجاره وَتَفتحت القبور وَانبعث اجسَاد كثير من اجسَادِ الطاهرين (48r)
w-tšqqt ʾl-ḥǧʾrh wa-taftḥt ʾl-qbwr wa-ʾnbʿṯ ʾǧsād kṯyr mn ʾǧsādi ʾl-ṭʾhryn
'Then the rocks split into pieces and the graves were opened up and many of the bodies of the pure were resurrected'

The number of examples where the same root occurs in form VII and form V with a passive meaning is admittedly quite limited. Nevertheless, pluractionality is attested as a feature of forms II

and V elsewhere in Arabic. In the Quran, note the following alternation between forms I (the passive of which is often form VII) and II (the reflexive/passive of which is frequently form V).

10.1. Form I *ḏabaḥa*

(540) إِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَأْمُرُكُم أَنْ تَذْبَحُوا بَقَرَةً (Q2.67)
ʾinna llāha yaʾmurukum ʾan taḏbaḥū baqaratan
'Indeed, God commands you to sacrifice a cow'

10.2. Form II *ḏabbaḥa*

(541) يُذَبِّحُونَ أَبْنَآءَكُم (Q2.49)
yuḏabbiḥūna ʾabnāʾa-kum
'[the people of Pharoah] are sacrificing your sons'

10.3. Form I *ṣalaba*

(542) وَمَا قَتَلُوهُ وَمَا صَلَبُوهُ (Q4.157)
wa-mā qatalū-hu wa-mā ṣalabū-hu
'But they neither killed him nor crucified him'

10.4. Form II *ṣallaba*

(543) ثُمَّ لَأُصَلِّبَنَّكُم أَجْمَعِينَ (Q7.124)
ṯumma la-ʾuṣallibanna-kum ʾağmaʿīna
'Then I will crucify you (MPL) all'

Such pluractionality is similarly attested across dialects from Egypt and eastward.[6] In Damascene Arabic, for example, one can

[6] This distribution was reported for numerous dialects based on informants from Egypt, Jedda (Saudi Arabia), and Bahrain in a presentation by Marijn van Putten at the *Arabic Linguistics Forum* in Vienna, Austria,

find *lā təʾṭof haz-zuhūr* ‘Don’t pick those flowers’ or *lā təʾaṭṭif haz-zuhūr* ‘idem.’, but ***lā təʾaṭṭif haz-zahra* ‘Don’t pick this flower’ is ungrammatical (Cowell 1964, 253).

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on 4th September, 2025. For each dialect, form II was used when the object was plural, form I was grammatical only when the object was singular.

CHAPTER 9. CONCLUSIONS

The foregoing chapters have analysed the language attested in the MS witness to one of our earliest translations of the Gospels into Arabic. The MS—Vatican Arabic MS 13—has featured prominently in scholarly discussions, not only of pre- and early Islamic-era Christian literary production, but also monastic scribal culture. Language has been a significant focus in those discussions, despite the fact that no systematic linguistic study of any portion of the MS had yet been undertaken. Further, the assumptions that underlie the various positions on the dating and provenance of Vat. Ar. 13 and its composition reflect overly simplistic, and often anachronistic, beliefs about the synchronic and diachronic realities of the Arabic linguistic landscape in the pre- and early Islamic periods. In each domain of grammar, as well as writing traditions and orthographic practices, we have seen that contemporary corpora—even ones treated by default as part of the broader Classical Arabic canon, such as the *qirāʾāt*—are characterised by much of the same kinds of variation attested in Vat. Ar. 13 and other early Christian MSS. Above and beyond the linguistic particulars, however, the goal of this book has been to embody an alternative approach to the study and contextualisation of pre-modern Middle Arabic texts, namely, by showing that both the language and the sociolinguistic implications thereof must be reconstructed as much as possible by availing ourselves of all potentially-relevant comparanda.

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There are many implications of the arguments and data adduced herein for the study of this particular MS, for early Christian writing, and for the linguistic landscape of the period; I will restrict myself here to discussing what I consider the most significant. First, the differences in writing practice and grammar will nuance answers to questions about the MS itself. As we have seen throughout, the grammar of Hand A, and to a lesser extent Hand B, is characterised by a preference for Old Ḥiǧāzī/Quranic forms, whereas later hands made use of other, non-Ḥiǧāzī ones. For example, we saw a strong preference in Hand A for the Ḥiǧāzī forms of the jussive of geminate (II = III) verbs, whereas later hands moved toward the Naǧdī forms that become more popular in the *ʿArabiyyah* and Classical tradition. We saw the same trend in, e.g., the locative adverbs, where use of *hunālika* decreases with each hand in favour of *hunāka*. When we compare aspects of the writing and linguistic profiles of the different scribes, Hand C is most similar to the other early Christian MSS indisputably produced in Palestine. Thus, rather than being viewed as the product of one place, it seems likely that the original MS—presumably the product of Hands A and B—was produced elsewhere, possibly a monastery in southern Syria (as proposed by Schulthess 2019 and Zaki 2022)—but, at some point later, brought to one of the monasteries of Palestine, where Hand C filled in part of the damaged sections of the MS.

A second implication is that there is no longer any reason to begin with the assumption that any early Christian (or non-Christian) author was by default attempting to write normative or textbook Classical Arabic. This is not to say that many features

that became normativised as Classical features were not used or considered prestigious; indeed, we have seen many of them attested in each of the four scribal hands attested in Vat. Ar. 13. Rather, the contention here is that the textbook Classical Arabic that is often assumed to represent the point of departure for Arabic composition had not yet crystallised in a way that was ubiquitous. This is plainly evident in the *qirāʾāt* themselves, which clearly interact and draw from the linguistic tradition of the *ʿArabiyyah*, but do so in ways that are not consistent and which cut against what would later become Classical Arabic norms. If we are unwilling to conclude that inconsistent application of grammatical rules, or partial manifestation of a linguistic feature (e.g., realisation of the *hamzah*) is sub-standard in a *qirāʾah*, then there must be something demonstrable in the Christian (or any Middle Arabic) writing that makes that conclusion substantially likelier to warrant the label. Rather, as I have argued throughout, the features that are attested in the *qirāʾāt*, both transmitted and ones derived from the vocalised Quranic MSS, as well as variation typical of the *ʿArabiyyah* tradition itself, overlap substantially with features from Vat. Ar. 13 (and other early Christian MSS). The fact that these same features in the latter corpus are regularly treated as examples of sub-standard, or Middle, features, whereas they are not in the latter, is based on assumptions that I do not believe can hold any longer.

Relatedly, by expanding the horizon beyond later textbook Classical Arabic, on the one hand, and colloquial features only insofar as they are attested in modern dialects, on the other, we discover a great deal about the linguistic nature of the varieties

and registers with which scribal authors in the Levantine monastic milieu were familiar and from which they drew. A salient example of this is *ʾimālah*, which, as I have shown in Chs 2 and 3, reflects (at least) two different kinds, one attested in modern dialects—a phonemic distinction between verbs ending in **aya* and nominals ending in **ay(V)*—as well as one paralleled in contemporary *qirāʾāt* traditions, in which **ā* and *āʾ* sequences were fronted/raised to *ē* and *ēʾ* when *r*-adjacent. Neither feature is typical of later, normative Classical Arabic, but the latter is well-attested in the Quranic recitation tradition, and, based on clues from contemporary orthographic practices, seems to have been fairly common as well.

Throughout the book, parallels with the Quranic *qirāʾāt* have featured especially prominently. This is for two reasons. First, many features typical of the early Christian MSS are attested in some subset of Quranic recitation traditions, whether canonical ones or ones reflected only in the vocalised MS tradition. This itself is significant; indeed, it seems as though a primary reference for many Christian scribal authors when integrating non-local and vernacular elements was popular Quranic reading practices, perhaps even more than the *ʿArabiyyah*. We should perhaps not be surprised by this. After all, scribal authors were engaged in understanding the challenges posed by Islam, and they often displayed detailed knowledge of the Quran and integrated its language, vocabulary, and phraseology into their works. It is only natural, then, to assume familiarity with the ways Muslims read the Quran. Second, the disposition to language in the *qirāʾāt* is one in which aesthetic and grammatical

sensibilities varied. Given the ways in which the grammarians talk about certain variants—as *qabīḥ* 'ugly' or *yustaḥsan* 'to be preferred'—it seems that this kind of approach to linguistic variation was common in the period during which Christians wrote. This is quite different from the bipolar paradigm traditionally assumed, in which a single, ubiquitous register reigned, and authors felt bound to at least attempt to reproduce it. I have argued here that, whether the source was oral or written, the evidence from this and other MSS was a permeability between features that made variation natural, at least in certain genres.

In describing the language of these MSS, I have adopted the same approach that scholars have when studying virtually every other corpus, pre-Islamic and modern, which is to collect the data and attempt to use the tools of synchronic and diachronic linguistic analysis to identify the patterns of the grammar. This contrasts historically with the approach to Middle Arabic, which assumes a single target and focuses on purported deviations from that norm. But taking inspiration from the *ḥuǧaǧ* literature on variation in the grammatical tradition and the *qirāʾāt*, I begin by assuming grammatical coherence, appealing to explanations of pseudocorrection or grammatical mistake only when no other explanation is forthcoming. I hope further to have demonstrated the importance of beginning with thorough documentation and study of the language of a MS or corpus, without assuming what one expects to find. For these purposes, quantitative data is key, especially for features like morpho-syntactic ones with a complicated and varied distribution. Quantification does not remove the

interpretive element, of course. However, it places the interpretation on solid empirical grounds and allows for easier and more accurate comparison across MSS and corpora.

Finally, I conclude by contending that the regnant sociolinguistic paradigm for conceptualising and studying Middle Arabic, while a necessary corrective to the simplistic historical model which it critiqued, is based on a faulty assumption about the nature of diglossia in Arabic. This is not the place to study whether and to what degree what we call Classical Arabic was prestigious in various places. Rather, it is to suggest that the bipolar H–L continuum, on which H = Classical Arabic and L = colloquial Arabic, cannot be anachronistically retrojected onto earlier periods. Instead, the synchronic sociolinguistic reality must be reconstructed through close reading and comparison of texts. The one offered here of Vat. Ar. 13 shows that many features not typical of Classical Arabic were popular and considered equally prestigious, if not more so, than ones that became part of Classical Arabic. Classical Arabic was only the end point of one particular intellectual tradition. No doubt it became dominant in centres of power later on, but it clearly did not oust all others, even much later than the period under discussion here. In any event, as we have seen with Hand C, it is clear that, for many Christian authors, local features—even ones associated with the vernacular—were preferred, especially perhaps when writing genres intended for lay usage, such as Bible translations.

Vat. Ar. 13 serves as a witness to Christian engagement with local and broader patterns in Arabic composition and lin-

guistic performance. By adopting the multipolar approach implemented and advocated for here, which contextualises the MS with other such sources—epigraphic, papyrological, textual, and intellectual—we gain a unique window into the (socio)linguistic world and grammatical sensibilities of those outside of Baṣrā and Kūfah in the 9th / 10th centuries CE.

APPENDIX. ONOMASTIC AND LEXICAL NOTES

A.1. Proper Names

In Vat. Ar. 13, some names are characterised by a single morphological form, either because they only occur once, or because the persons and places to which they refer were stable in Arabic, e.g., موسى / موسي 'Moses'. The latter group of names is often at odds with Christianised forms of the name, drawn from Greek and Syriac, and close to/identical with the Muslim forms of the name, e.g., هابيل 'Abel'. A list of such names is given in Table A.1 (overleaf).

Other names are characterised by the same basic form, but show variant spellings across the MS. In some instances, the difference is the presence or absence of dots (e.g., اسعيا / اشعيا *īsaʿyā* 'Isaiah' and هيروذس / هيرودس 'Herod'). An interesting by-form is found in the spelling of Pilate's name, which usually starts with *fāʾ* but once with *bāʾ*, e.g., فيلاطس / بيلاطس. This is presumably due to the fact that both Greek and Syriac constituted *Vorlagen* for the MS (Monferrer-Sala 2013), with the form بيلاطس *bīlāṭos* reflecting a Greek origin < πιλᾶτος **pīlāṭos*, the bilabial voiceless unaspirated stop /p/ is spelled with /b/, the closest sound in the contemporary phonetic inventory, but the Syriac spelling is directly calqued: ܦܝܠܛܘܣ *fylṭws* > فيلاطس. A list of these from the Gospels is found in Table A.2 (pg. 375). Note that an * marks the most common form in Vat. Ar. 13.

Table A.1: Names with only one form and one spelling in the Gospels

Name	**Arabic**	**Folio**
Moses	موسي / موسى	68v
Sodom and Gomorrah	سدوم وعامورا	14r
Tyre and Sidon	صور وصيدان	80r–80v
Abel	هابيل	40v
Daniel	دانيال	41v
Solomon	سليمن	19r
Jairus	يواراش	55r
Phoenician	فونيقي	57v
Syria / Al-Šām	السام	57v
Philip	فيلفوس	59v
Caesaria Philippi	قاساريه فيلفوس	59v
Kinneret / Ginosar	جيناشار	85v
Chorazin	كورزين	16v
Bethsaida	بيت صياذا	16v
Bartimeus	طيمي بر طيمي	65v
Andrew	اندريوس	69v
Golgotha	الجاجله	73v
Emmanuel	عمانوال	1v
Rachel	راحيل	2r
Archelaeus	اركلاوس	2r

Table A.2: Names with one form but spelling variation

Name	Arabic Spellings	Folio
Israel	*اسرايل	76r
	اسراييل	14v
Isaiah	اسعيا	3v
	*اشعيا	1v
	ايشعيا	86r
	شعيا	10v
David	*داود	34v
	داؤد	13r
Pilate	*فيلاطس	50r
	بيلاطس	50r
Herod	هيرودس	2r
	هيروذس	83r

Finally, and most interestingly, a number of names are characterised by multiple forms. In the case of many names, each morphological form has spelling variation as well. In order to make it clear where I see a difference in form, on the one hand, and spelling, on the other, in Table A.3 (overleaf and following page) I have left borders between variant forms, and removed them between spelling variants of the same form.

Table A.3: Names with multiple morphological forms and spellings

Name	**Arabic Forms**	**Folio**
Jesus	يسوع*	1v; 3r; 3v; 14r; 14v
	ايسوع*	3r; 3v; 61r
	ايشوع	65v
John	يوحنا*	35v; 60v; 62v; 65v; 67r; 67v; 77v; 83r; 83v; 83v; 84r
	يحنا	3r
	يوحنن*	16r; 56r; 60r; 65r; 79r; 83r; 83v; 83v; 84r
	يوحنان	16v
Elijah	الياسين*	16r; 60r; 60v; 61r; 61r–61v, 74r, 76r, 83r
	اليا	27v, 28r, 60v–61r; 61r-61v
	الهيا	74r
	ايلياس	48r
Simon	سمعون*	77v; 80r
	شمعون*	13v; 14r; 50v; 77v
	سمعان	47v; 50r
Jerusalem	اوريشلم*	24r
	اوريسلم*	2v
	اورسلم	2v
	اورشلم	4r
Galilee	الجليل*	2r
	جليلا	30v

Name	Arabic Forms	Folio
Capernaum	كفره انحم	16v
	كفر ناحوم	82r
Magdalene	مجدلانيه	54r
	مجدليه	48v
Gethsemane	جشمانيه	47v
	حدسامان	71v

The alternative forms in a few names seem to reflect a borrowed form over an Arabicised one. For example, the two forms of the name 'Galilee'—جليلا and الجليل—respectively reflect an Aramaic loan, with the word-final Aramaic definite article in *ǧəlīlā*, and an Arabicised one with the definite article in *al-ǧalīl*.

The forms of two names are especially interesting and worthy of further discussion. The first is the default form of the name *Elijah*, which throughout the MS is الياسين. While the others can be unambiguously connected with Greek (ايلياس) or Syriac (اليا and الهيا), the form الياسين is otherwise attested only in the Quran at Q37.130, where it is spelled consonantally as ال سس. Traditionally, this has been either interpreted as a reference to Elijah, or the 'progeny of Yāsīn', with Yāsīn here equated with Muḥammad (*Ǧāmiʿ al-Bayān*, vol. 23:94). Kashouh (2012, 164–65, §5.1.5.6.3.4) discusses this at length, arguing that الياسين as a reference to Elijah reflected a pre-Islamic Christian Arabic usage. It is not clear whether Kashouh believes this usage is reflected in the Quran, but that by the time of the exegetes this term was unfamiliar to many, hence the reassignment of the name to Muḥammad, or whether the Quran itself reflects a bungling of

the name. The latter is perhaps reflected in the writing of the name with a space, indicating, as in the later interpretive tradition, a folk etymologisation of the term as *ʾāl* = family + *yāsīn* = proper name. In any event, while Kashouh takes this as further evidence for a pre-Islamic Arabian origin to the translation, this is far from certain. Clearly knowledge of this name as referring to Elijah persisted into the 9th century CE, when al-Ṭabarī wrote *Ǧāmiʿ al-Bayān*. It is important to note, as Kashouh does, that this is the only early Arabic Gospel MS known to us that uses الياسين for Elijah. I suggest, *pace* Kashouh, that this usage, combined with other Islamic names (e.g., *hābīl* for 'Abel'), and the clearly Islamic vocabulary (on which, see §A.2 below), reflects intentional engagement with the language of the Quran and Quranic discourse. This has, as we have seen throughout the preceding chapters, been a theme of the language of the MS as we have it.

The forms for the name of *John* are interesting for two reasons. The first is distributional: the forms often co-occur on the same folio, within a few lines of each other. For example, on fols 83r–v, each of يوحنا and يوحنن occur, without any change in referent (both are to John the Baptiser). Further, the form of the name which became typical in Islamic tradition, and continues among Arab Christians in Arabic until today, يوحنا, is clearly closely related to the Aramaic ܝܘܚܢܢ *ywḥnn* /yūḥanán/, which is attested in Arabic with two spellings, يوحنن and another with a long vowel يوحنان. The latter form perfectly represents the presumed pronunciation of the Aramaic. Less clear is the spelling يوحنن. It could be that it reflects penultimate stress, /yūḥánan/, or perhaps just a calqued spelling of the Aramaic.

The question remains how to understand the relationship between the form of the name derived from Aramaic, *yūḥanān* or

yūḥanan and the more well-known Arabicised form *yūḥannā*. One strategy that is especially common between Semitic languages is morphosemantic matching, where a combination of morphological and (folk) semantic equivalency leads to the use of a native name or form in place of the original one. This is likely the case for names such as *ʿīsā* 'Jesus' and the Islamic form of the name for John, *yahyā* (Al-Jallad and Al-Manaser 2021). Unlike *yaḥyā*, however, names with a spelling that suggests *yūḥanān* or *yūḥanan* have yet to be found. Names from the etymologically related root *ḥnn* are attested in, e.g., Safaitic and elsewhere. Perhaps a hybrid form was created, based on similarities between *ḥannān* and *yūḥanan*. This still leaves unexplained the variant *yūḥannā*. One possibility is that *yūḥanan* was Arabicised as *yūḥannan*, which would be stressed on the penultimate, i.e., *yūḥánnan*. If this occurred in dialects that subsequently underwent the same **an* > *ā* shift that resulted in the accusative *ā*, this would result in **yūḥannan* > *yūḥannā*, matching the form as it spread. Since this shift apparently occurred in Nabataean Arabic (Al-Jallad 2018a), and in Ḥiǧāzī Arabic (Van Putten and Stokes 2018), I suggest that this is a likely scenario to explain an otherwise perplexing form.

A.2. Lexicon

Throughout the MS, vocabulary that are drawn from, or interact with, Islamic vocabulary are not rare. Table A.4 (overleaf) is a list of such vocabulary. Kashouh (2012, 159–67) presumes such vocabulary was added later, after the spread of Islam, which is of course possible, but purely speculative.

Table A.4: Islamic-inspired vocabulary from Vat. Ar. 13

Vocabulary	**Meaning**
الشيطان الرجيم	‘the devil’
الله تبارك وتعالى	‘God’
طريق مستقيم	‘correct path’
سبيل الله	‘the way of God’
جزيه	‘tax’
سنه	‘tradition’
سنه موسى	‘tradition of Moses’
شرايع السنه	‘the laws of the tradition’
منبر	‘pulpit’
العذاب الاليم	‘torture’
رسل	‘prophets’
نبي مرسل	‘prophet’
نكح	‘he married’
الوصايا المنزله	‘the revealed commandments’
حقا يقينا	‘truly’
المُسلِم	‘the betrayer (= Judas Iscariot)’

Given the translation style, and the style of the Arabic (on which, see especially Monferrer-Sala 2013; 2015), it is perhaps unsurprising that calquing is relatively rare. One expression that is directly calqued from Syriac and used frequently throughout Vat. Ar. 13, but is, to my knowledge, not attested in the other early Christian Arabic corpus, is اخذ بالوجوه lit. ‘taker(s) of the faces’, which is a calque of Syriac ܢܨܒܐ ܒܐܦܐ *nasbē b-āfē* lit. ‘takers of the noses’, which is used to mean ‘hypocrites’. Likewise, direct

borrowings from Aramaic are rare, but do occur, e.g., use of the root **sn'* for 'to hate', instead of Arabic roots such as *krh* in fols 80v–81r, although it is also possible that this is a retention in Arabic, since it is spelled *šn'*. However, since Aramaic loans with both *š* (< *s^1) and *s* (< *s^2 and *s^3) are realised in early Arabic with both *šīn* and *sīn*, it is impossible to say for sure.

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Phillip W. Stokes

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